THE TEACHING OF POLITICS: SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

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PREFACE

The year 1968 saw the publication of *What Culture? What Heritage?*, the report of the inquiry organized by A. B. Hodgetts into the teaching of Canadian history in Canadian schools. Its depressing findings quickly became well known and led to a vigorous campaign to correct the state of affairs that it described. Not the least of its results was the founding of the Canada Studies Foundation in 1970 and the Foundation's enthusiastic and strenuous promotion, since that date, of the production of teaching materials and of the development of new curricula.

In 1978 Hodgetts, together with Paul Gallagher, both of them former directors of the Foundation, published *Teaching Canada for the 80's*, a set of guidelines and suggestions for teachers of Canadian Studies, or, as the Foundation prefers to describe it, of Canada Studies. This book led the Canada Studies Foundation to sponsor a series of projects across Canada through which curriculum materials could be developed.

One of these projects is based at the University of Manitoba and is concerned with the teaching of politics in elementary and secondary school classrooms. Its purpose is to produce materials for teachers and students — and indeed, for the general public also — in order to strengthen the teaching of politics in Canadian schools.

This monograph is part of the activities of this project. To date, booklets have been written and tested in both elementary and secondary school classrooms and more are being written. In addition, monographs are being written so that teachers — and others — can keep their knowledge of politics up to date.

This monograph addresses the general question of teaching politics to school students. It argues that a particular kind of political education, stressing participation and critical enquiry, is essential in any democracy that aims to be truly democratic. However, it concentrates upon the 'how' rather than the 'why' of political education, since most existing discussions of the subject tend to be rather long on theory but unduly short on practice.

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I should also like to acknowledge the financial support of both the Royal Canadian Legion and the Canada Studies Foundation, without which this monograph could never have been begun.

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CHAPTER 1

WHY TEACH POLITICS?

Perhaps the pithiest answer to the question, why teach politics? is that usually attributed to people who climb mountains: because they are there. For politics is all around us. It touches everyone directly or indirectly, it helps to shape our lives. If one aim of education is the achievement of personal autonomy, as it surely must be, one can hardly ignore politics, which has so much to do with establishing the boundaries within which we can be autonomous.

And yet, despite the permeation of our lives by politics, and despite the urgency of many of the political problems facing Canada — or perhaps because of them — many people are disillusioned with politics. A recent (1974) study of opinion noted that

> . . . a majority of Canadians simply do not like politics or politicians . . . the general comments on politics were 33% positive and 52% negative. The general comments on politicians were a staggering 78% negative in tone. Politicians tend to be seen by Canadians as "terrible", as "crooked", as "doing a bad job", as "out for themselves", as "wasting the money we pay in taxes", as "generally ineffectual". Government has the same image; attitudes towards it are 75% negative. Similarly, the general comments on parties are 78% negative.[1]

In a way, such reactions may be healthy. It is perhaps more sensible and safer to distrust government than to trust it. To the extent that the evidence reveals a constructive scepticism, there is no cause for alarm. It may, however, be that people are instead displaying an unreasoning cynicism, a blind negativism — a very different and disturbing proposition.

Of course, one might argue, people are right to be cynical: politics is rigged in favour of the big interests, politicians are on the take, democracy is a sham. When people reject politics, they are seeing things as they really are and they correctly recognize their powerlessness. Such a proposition can certainly be advanced. Indeed, evidence can be found to support it.

But in either case — be it unreasoning cynicism or acute insight — the answer is not to reject politics, but to become involved in it. If people are ignored or manipulated, or if they feel themselves to be, perhaps it is in part because they allow it to happen. Although Canadians turn out in reasonable numbers for federal and provincial elections (though not for municipal), they rarely do anything more political than cast a ballot. And yet, clearly, there are many forms of political activity beyond voting.

The evidence suggests, however, that the more activity that is demanded, the lower will be the level of participation. Thus, in 1974 88% of Canadians reported that they "often" or "sometimes" voted in federal elections, but only 11% ever took part in campaign activities, although, of course, in any given federal election something like a quarter of those eligible will not vote at all.[2] To use the terms coined by Milbrath, there are lots of "spectators" and "apathetics" but only a few "gladiators".

To make this problem worse, there are precious few opportunities for genuine participation in other areas of life. The workplace, the school, even the family are generally organized on authoritarian rather than participatory lines. If, as seems reasonable to suggest, one learns to participate by participating, then it might not matter too much if people did not participate in politics so long as there were other forums open to them. Unfortunately, there are not.

To aggravate this problem, the more active forms of political participation are dominated by the middle and upper-middle classes — just as parliament itself is dominated by male professionals (a student once asked me in all sincerity whether one had to be a lawyer in order to sit in the House of Commons.) Hodgetts and Gallagher put it well:

> Because the candidates and the minority who are really active in party politics are mainly from well-educated middle- or upper-class backgrounds, the government is in the hands of people who are fairly satisfied with the status quo. Conversely, a great many Canadians, particularly those who might gain from change, sit on the sidelines, exerting little influence over government yet being subject to a multitude of decisions.[3]

It is true that there is a tradition in modern political science which sees great virtue in the passiveness of the majority, arguing that too much political involvement would politicize every issue and, so to speak, overload the system: "extreme interest goes with extreme partisanship and might culminate in rigid fanaticism that could destroy democratic processes if generalized throughout the community."[4]

The very wording is revealing: extreme, rigid, fanaticism — the words are hardly neutral. In addition, interest is too narrowly equated with partisanship and partisanship with fanaticism. It does not, after all, necessarily follow that interest in an issue leads to partisanship in any narrow sense, nor that a partisan is a fanatic, although no doubt the advocates of élite democracy see this as the consequence of involving the "masses" in politics. Members of Parliament, for example, are generally extremely interested in political questions and they are also extreme partisans: despite this, however, Parliament cannot be described as a fanatical place. Just the opposite: parliament demonstrates the possibility of combining high political interest with a civilized and tolerant respect for others' opinions.

More substantially, the whole argument for élite democracy simply fails to address the point made by Hodgetts and Gallagher concerning the class-based nature of much political activity. There is as yet no evidence that democracy will collapse if participation broadens. As things stand, only a small minority of people do, in fact, take advantage of the opportunities for participation that even now exist. To this extent democracy in Canada rests upon too narrow a foundation.

It is probably too ambitious to hope that any programme of political education will produce a generation of political activists but at least it can aim at teaching the skills, knowledge and dispositions that will make it possible for people to participate in the political system should they choose to do so. The aim is "to lay the foundations for intelligent participation in public matters", to quote a statement of the Winnipeg School Board made in 1898.

It may not be too far-fetched to link most people's political apathy and sense of powerlessness to the way they have been taught about politics. Not only have forms

of political participation other than voting rarely been discussed, but students have been taught not about what exists but what is supposed to exist. The ideal is preferred to the real. Students have been taught, for example, that three readings of a bill in the Commons and the Senate, followed by the bestowing of royal assent, produce a law. Nothing is said about how or why a particular topic comes to be the subject of legislation in the first place; nor is anything said about lobbies, pressure-groups or the whole process of decision-making. In the words of a recent textbook: "Your Member of Parliament meets with other M.P.'s in Canada's capital city, Ottawa. There, in a special room called the House of Commons, they run your government."[5] One can only say: "Oh! No! They don't!" The danger is not only that such descriptions are, at best, half-truths but that they may boomerang. What happens when children see, as they inevitably will in this age of instant information, the contrast between what they are taught and what, in fact, goes on?

This ignoring of realities is part and parcel of a general unwillingness to discuss conflict in the classroom, or to see politics as having anything to do with conflict or power. Harold Lasswell's definition of politics has become well-known: who gets what, when and how? Bernard Crick has more delicately defined politics as "the creative conciliation of differing interests."[6] Hodgetts and Gallagher note that

> . . . politics is often about disagreements and controversy; where there is general agreement there need be no real political activity. This does not mean that society is always in a turmoil or that consensus is never achieved in politics. The balancing of interests, the resolution of conflict, and the lessening of tension are among the principal purposes of political activity. But the solution to a problem usually generates a new set of conditions and tensions.

Conflict, then, is at the very core of politics and, in a country as diverse as Canada, conflict can be especially acute, to the point that the Speech from the Throne which opened parliament in April 1980, raised the question of whether Canada would still exist by the end of the decade or whether it would be pulled apart by its divisions and disagreements. The 1974 survey already quoted also found that "the Canadian federal system is evaluated . . . as an unjust one by most people. There is general dissatisfaction with its operation . . . Most people feel that their areas pay the costs, and that other areas get the benefits." And this perception is unlikely to change when political parties draw their parliamentary strength not so much from the country at large as from particular regions within it. It is not surprising that the regionally lop-sided results of the federal elections of 1979 and 1980 raised a flurry of debate about the merits of proportional representation.

André Bernard has suggested that definitions of politics can be grouped into two broad categories: the first sees politics as the instrument of collective action in a society, a view which sees government as acting impartially and objectively to foster the common good; the second sees politics as the process by which some people exercise power over others and by which different groups struggle for this power.[8] Traditionally, and still today, civics teaching in the schools has been based upon the first of these two conceptions, so that questions of conflict and power have been ignored. Rather, in the words of a recent school-text, "government is you and others working together to satisfy some of your needs."[9]

This view of politics can do little to prepare students for a world where governments, in fact, simply cannot satisfy everyone's needs since there are simply not enough resources available. Indeed, there is a political philosophy which denies that government should be meeting people's needs anyway, arguing instead that this is a matter of individual responsibility. In any case, not all needs are seen as valid, legitimate or desirable: hence the recurrent controversies about such issues as

legalizing prostitution, liberalizing abortion laws or censoring literature. Thus, government may, in fact, act to prevent people satisfying their needs. Again, different people's needs may be in conflict, as is the case, for example, in the east-west argument over gas and oil pricing, or the north-south argument over pipelines. Thus, government has to make decisions which will satisfy some groups but not others, or indeed try to avoid making decisions at all in order to head off possible crises (in the style of Mackenzie King according to some historians). There is a further refinement, as we are finding these days in connection with fuel supplies and prices: there are needs which government claims to see more clearly than do the people generally, so that government's first task is to persuade people that a need really exists, even though they do not see it. It is surely not particularly controversial to teach all this to youngsters, nor to show them that one function of government is to try to manage the conflicts that inevitably arise in a society. Of course, one cannot properly speak of conflict without speaking also of the distribution of power, especially the power to make government respond to your group rather than some other.

It may not be too far-fetched to suggest that some part of people's disillusionment with politics is due to their failure to grasp what politics is really all about. Primed by their school civics to think of politics as a means by which some enlightened legislators disinterestedly make decisions for the common good, they are baffled or sickened by the obvious contradiction with reality and retreat into apathy or negativism. Hodgettts, for one, has suggested that "the lack of realism in civics classes might help to develop unfounded cynicism."[10]

This failure to tackle the tough job of dealing with what exists, of facing and explaining reality, is reinforced by another characteristic of traditional practice: its emphasis not so much on politics as on government, on institutions and structure at the expense of political processes and behaviour. Politics are portrayed as something totally static, as a set of rules to be learned or formulae to be applied. The dynamics of politics are ignored. In this view, for example, the House of Commons has 282 members and certain quaint and illogical rules. It also possesses certain functions and these are often listed — a, b, c, and so forth. But nothing is said about what makes a person want to get into the House of Commons, how he or she goes about getting there, what it is like to be there, how people behave and what they do when they get there. Even those exotic rules are rarely explained, *vide* how few students (or adults, for that matter) can explain why the Speaker is called by that title when, in fact, the sensible name would be chairperson or (as in French) Président.

The defects of this approach are obvious: it is boring (for both teachers and students), unrealistic and perpetually obsolescent since institutions frequently change. More fundamentally, it confuses knowledge about citizenship with its practice. Thus arises the paradox of students who can write an acceptable essay on the principles of democracy but who, as adults, can hardly be bothered to vote, let alone do anything more active.

One learns to be active — politically or otherwise — by being active. One learns a skill by practising it. Political education, therefore, if it is seriously concerned with developing political efficacy or competence, must concern itself with the appropriate skills and attitudes, as well as with knowledge. It must attend also to the involvement and activity of students. Research into political socialization suggests that the curriculum on its own is a limited medium of political learning. Educational research has drawn attention to the importance of the "hidden curriculum", of the general climate and context of classrooms and schools. Students may acquire their political attitudes and assumptions more from the way we teach than from

what we teach. To no one's surprise, research indicates that political competence and a sense of political efficacy are aspects of a more general sense of efficacy: "persons who feel more effective in their everyday tasks and challenges are more likely to participate in politics."[11] It is worth quoting at this point the observations of two political scientists who have spent much of their professional lives comparing different political systems:

> . . . if in most social situations the individual finds himself subservient to some authority figure, it is likely that he will expect such authority relationships in the political sphere. On the other hand, if outside the political sphere he has opportunities to participate in a wide range of social decisions, he will probably expect to be able to participate in political decisions as well. Furthermore, participation in non-political decision-making may give one the skills needed to engage in political participation.[12]

These comments are as applicable to teaching as to anything else. However, there is considerable evidence that many classrooms still assign too passive a role to students. The anthropologist, Lawrence Wylie, made this observation about a French infant school when the teacher remarked of her pupils that "there is nothing serious they have to learn for a year or so":

> The children, however, *do* learn important lessons. They learn to accept the discipline of the school. They even learn about learning — that is, they are impressed with the fact that to learn means to copy or repeat what the teacher tells them.[13]

The implications of this for political learning need no comment. In a similar vein, Hess and Torney found in the United States that "compliance to rules and authority is a major focus of civics education in elementary schools."[14]

All of this raises the question of the hidden curriculum on which so much has been written in recent years. In the words of the old song, "It ain't what you do; it's the way you do it." Robert Dreeben, for example, describes work in an industrial society as being characterized by (i) a distinction between workers as people and the positions that they occupy; (ii) a physical separation from the household; (iii) individual accountability for tasks which are assessed by prescribed standards; (iv) large bureaucratically run organizations. This kind of work demands certain attitudes and habits. Here, says Dreeben, is an important function of the school. It is the institution which trains youngsters for this kind of work and behaviour.[15] At this level, then, one function of the school is to equip students with appropriate dispositions and attitudes for the world of work in an industrial society. At the same time, the school also serves to classify students by different types of curricula, by marks and by reports, so that they come to occupy different ranks in the social and economic scale. Both processes carry with them considerable spill-over into the political arena.

Overall, most children learn to be dependent rather than autonomous. They define the teacher's role as one of keeping order, giving instructions and evaluating performance. In the words of an English study: "children expect the teacher to act as the boss; to direct, initiate and control learning: to be judge and jury of work and conduct . . ."[16] Research into what actually goes on in classrooms suggests very strongly that we could easily allow students a greater voice in their own learning. One survey of the research concludes that, first, teachers monopolize classroom talk; second, students are not as free to act as teachers think they are; third, teachers emphasize short, factual questions. There is plenty of evidence that independence, creativity, autonomy (in a word, efficacy) are not highly valued in many classrooms. Few report cards contain such headings as "thinks for herself/himself"; "independent"; "asks interesting questions"; "creative". The usual categories are

(to quote an actual example): gets along with others; uses time to good advantage; completes assignments; works quietly and independently; listens well; dependable; produces neat work; takes criticism and disappointment well. There is not much scope for efficacy — political or otherwise — here.

All this is to say that what children are taught about politics is often contradicted by the way in which they are taught. They learn about democracy in an authoritarian setting. They are urged to participate when they become adults, but are not encouraged to do so while they are young. In addition to this, the content of political education creates further problems, all too often ignoring the real world of politics for some ideal picture of what is supposed to happen. If, to repeat an earlier statement, political education is supposed "to lay the foundations for intelligent participation in public matters", then much of what has been done has been misconceived.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICS AND THE STUDENT

Clearly, no-one interested in the teaching of politics can afford to overlook those who will be at the receiving end: the students. What do they know? What can they understand? How do they learn? Such questions are especially important when politics are to be taught, since there is a considerable gap between the intellectual capabilities of children and adolescents and the complexities and abstractions of political debate. Teaching can be thought of as a question of translating a subject into terms that students can understand: in the case of politics, the translation can be especially difficult.

We now know that even young children know something about politics. As one authority puts it, "the child's political world begins to take shape before he even enters elementary school and . . . it undergoes the most rapid changes during these years."[17] Initally, the child's political world is far more a matter of attitudes and feelings than of knowledge or understanding. Children learn what their nationality is, their ethnic identity, their religion and so on. In addition, they pick up certain values: for instance, they soon learn that "democracy" is good while "communism" is bad (or *vice versa*). They also, of course, acquire the traits and dispositions which later come to have political relevance: they learn to be cooperative or competitive, conciliatory or aggressive, trusting or suspicious, and so on. Understandably, also, their understanding of government is highly personalized: young children find it difficult to think of government as institutions and roles, instead they think of people: queen, president, prime minister, leader.

This, then, is a picture (painted with a very broad brush) of children in the early elementary years. As they move into adolescence their perceptions of the political world understandably change: political knowledge increases, understanding becomes more abstract and sophisticated, trust in government decreases. Many of those who have specialized in the study of political socialization place particular emphasis upon the early adolescent years as the period in which youngsters become able to understand political issues and relationships and in which they are able to begin to think for themselves about political questions.

There is no need to enter the discussion as to which agencies and what processes are most effective in the political socialization process. Family, school, peer group, media, the political system — all play their part. Perhaps because most of the research has been done by political scientists, the main focus has generally been on the implications of political socialization for the political system, rather than upon

the youngsters being socialized. In much of the research, children appear as fairly passive recipients of socializing forces and messages. Socialization appears as a one-way street, running from the socializer (family, media, etc.) to the person being socialized. This means, despite some noble attempts, that it is extremely difficult to draw any conclusions from the research that have direct implications for teaching. In any case, to do this means leaping the philosophical wall that separates *is* from *ought*. The research may tell us what is; what we ought to do about it, however, remains a subject for philosophy.

Some of the research into political socialization turns explicitly to cognitive developmental theory, a theory which has much to offer anyone interested in teaching politics. Much of the research that has been done in this area derives, directly or indirectly, from the work of Piaget. For this reason, and especially in a work of this sort, it might be useful to begin with a brief outline of his views.

According to Piaget, a child's development begins with the sensori-motor stage which lasts from birth until approximately two years of age. In this stage, a child acquires behaviour patterns, as opposed to inborn reflexes. The various senses, of sight, touch and the rest, combine so that children learn to distinguish between themselves and the external world and to accept the permanence of objects.

This stage is followed by what Piaget calls the pre-operational stage, which lasts until approximately seven and is dominated by the acquisition of language. Here occurs the beginning of "thinking" — attempts to link cause and effect, to explain phenomena, to classify objects. By adult standards, however, this thinking is still very immature. In dealing with physical objects and quantities, for example, the child pays attention to only one aspect at the expense of the others, as shown by Piaget's well-known experiments involving bowls of flowers, rows of beads, containers of water and the rest.

At approximately seven children begin to enter the stage of concrete operations. Now they are less bound by their own perceptions and begin to think quite rationally, although at a very concrete level. Their ability to think abstractly is still very limited, as is their ability to form or test hypotheses or to reason from them. Concrete thought is rooted in and does not move beyond empirical reality. What is sometimes called propositional thinking (if . . . then . . .) rarely occurs in this stage. These last capacities begin to appear only after approximately ages eleven or twelve, by which time children are entering the stage of formal operations. Now they can begin to deal with abstract relationships instead of concrete things and with the form of an argument while ignoring its content. E. A. Peel uses the terms "describer" and "explainer" thinking instead of Piaget's concrete and formal operations. In describer thinking, he argues, a person is unable to move outside any given information and is limited to description of events. In explainer thinking, by contrast, a person is able to move beyond any given information in order to provide a satisfactory explanation of it.

Politics generally demands (even if it does not always get) what Peel calls "explainer" or Piaget "formal operational" thought. Political discussion is laden with such abstract terms as "radical", "conservative", "individualism", "civil liberties" — terms which many students find difficult even to begin to understand. In addition, political discussion often hinges upon complex and abstract concepts such as 'national interest', 'minority rights', 'social welfare'. More complicated yet, these concepts often have to be weighed against each other and a balance struck. Conflicting ideas and considerations have to be resolved. Understandably, all this is difficult for youngsters to grasp even in adolescence. An example may make this point clearer. I once saw a class of very bright and motivated Grade IX students

(i.e. they were considered to be considerably 'above average') trying to come to grips with the idea of majority government. They knew that, in a parliamentary system such as Canada's, the party which commanded a majority was supposed to form the government, although they were confused as to whether this majority was a matter of seats in the House of Commons or votes among the electorate. They also knew that in many elections the winning party in fact got less than fifty per cent of the popular vote. Indeed, when they looked at individual constituencies they found that often the winning candidates had more people voting against them than for them. In other words, they were knocking their heads against the definition of 'majority' as 'plurality'. Cognitive developmental theory offers an explanation (though not a solution): these Grade IX youngsters had simply not reached the level of intellectual development necessary to resolve all the complexities of the issue they were examining.

None of this, of course, is startlingly new. It parallels very closely the problems that youngsters have, for example, in understanding history. Teachers with a feel for history have often complained of the difficulties of teaching students the complexities and intricacies of the subject. Students see the world in blacks and whites, while history, like politics, is full of grays. They are prone to sweeping and absolute judgements in which things are either good or bad, or in today's language 'dumb' or 'neat'. They display the kind of thinking so nicely parodied in *1066 And All That*. The eminent historian Sir John Neale once wrote that he thought it unreasonable "to have young people writing of life before they have gathered sufficient experience to interpret it" and another prominent historian, G. R. Elton, has described his "serious doubts" about the wisdom of trying to teach what he calls "real history" to school students:

> History deals with the activities of men, not of abstractions, and a measure of maturity is really necessary before the student can understand what is before him and is being said to him. . . . In history, only experience and insight can save the intellect from its characteristic fault of over-simplifying and over-organizing every problem and even at eighteen, when mankind is most certain that it knows everything, it is easy to mistake absence of understanding for clarity of vision. In a very real sense, history is not a good subject to teach to children, or rather, the 'real' thing — academic history — is the wrong thing for them.[18]

As for history, so for politics. Consider, for example, this answer written by a Grade VII student to the question, "Why Was Ancient Rome Not A Democracy?" The question is itself an interesting example of combining political education with history, although it might have been left more open as "Was Ancient Rome A Democracy?" The answer indicates a youngster articulate beyond what might be expected in Grade VII, but this very fact helps to demonstrate the point.

> **Why The Government Of Rome Was Not A Democracy**
>
> It was not an exact democracy because the Plebians (*sic*) only had the right to choose and elect officials. They were not really ruling. Individually the Plebians (*sic*) gained more and more power because of their importance but they still did not rule. Later, all of their rights were printed and called the Twelve Tables. This did not do much to increase their freedom.
>
> They did not have a real leader such as Greece had in Cleisthenes or Pericles. Even after acquiring their own assembly the majority of Plebians (*sic*) were not ruling. Since there was no payment for attending the meetings as there was in Greece the Plebians (*sic*) couldn't afford to waste time at the meetings and only the rich went. Eventually the rich joined with the aristocrats and formed a new ruling class. Although there still wasn't a democracy most citizens were proud of their government. For under aristocratic rule they had come to conquer most of Europe.

The question is answered in the first sentence: Rome was not an "exact democracy" because the people could only "choose and elect officials." After this opening sentence, however, the essay moves to the Twelve Tables, to leadership and pride in government, so that it loses its initial focus. After a good, clear beginning, the argument wanders. Here perhaps is a youngster wavering between concrete and abstract thought, between what Peel would call describer and explainer thinking.

Students' level of cognitive development will presumably affect their thinking about politics. Here the work of Joseph Adelson and his colleagues is especially relevant:

> The years of early adolescence, twelve to sixteen, are a watershed era in the emergence of political thought. Ordinarily, the youngster begins adolescence incapable of complex political discourse — that is, mute on many issues and when not mute, then simplistic, primitive, subject to fancies, unable to enter fully the realm of political ideas. By the time this period is at an end, a dramatic change is evident; the youngster's grasp of the political world is now recognizably adult. His mind moves with some agility within the terrain of political concepts; he has achieved abstractness, complexity, and even some delicacy in his sense of political textures. . . .[19]

Adelson and his colleagues have identified the following changes in the thinking of young adolescents on political and social questions. First, they shift from what might be called a personal to a more institutional view of government. At twelve years of age, for example, youngsters see government as the President, the Prime Minister, the Mayor, or simply an amorphous "they". By the time they are sixteen or seventeen, however, they have a much more sophisticated view of government as a complex of institutions, bureaucracies, customs and the like. Second, early adolescents find it difficult to think in socio-centric terms; they show few signs of a sense of community and find it hard to think in terms of, say, the general good. Rather, instead of thinking of society as a whole, they think in terms of specific individuals. By the age of sixteen, however, adolescents are increasingly able to think about problems in terms of conflicting interests, of majority and minority rights, of the welfare of society as a whole. Third, during adolescence, youngsters' views of the function of government and law change. Twelve and thirteen-year-olds take a Hobbesian view of social life. Government is there to keep people in order; without it all would be chaos. In Adelson's words: "To a large and varied set of questions on crime and punishment, they consistently propose one form of solution: punish, and if that does not suffice, punish harder." By late adolescence, however, this single-minded authoritarianism has given way to a broader understanding of the various functions of law and government beyond that of retribution only. This development in youngsters' understanding and definition of law is seen also in some English research. There, students were asked to define a number of commonly used historical terms, including the word "law". The following typical responses were found:

Approx. 13 years:	laws are rules which should be obeyed.
Approx. 15 years:	laws are made for the good of the country.
Approx. 18 years:	laws are a system of rules which are imposed upon society in order to promote freedom for the individual while preventing him from encroaching on others' freedom.[20]

A fourth finding of Adelson's was, not surprisingly, that young adolescents have a very shallow concept of motivation. Their reasoning tends to be circular: people act wickedly because they are wicked. Judgements of character and behaviour are black-white, good-evil, with little appreciation of human complexity. Again, this simplicity declines with age. Fifth, Adelson found that the younsters he interviewed

showed little sense of historical time: "in the early years of adolescence the child's mind is locked into the present." Significantly, Adelson also found that, as adolescence progresses, youngsters were increasingly able to deal with the future, for instance in the anticipation of future consequences of present actions, whether real or assumed, but "for the most of our subjects, even the older ones, the sense of history is undeveloped."

In Australia, Connell found a similar pattern. His youngest children, five and six year olds, thought in a random, intuitive way. Their judgements were *ad hoc*, unrelated and inconsistent; the political world was largely unknown to them. By about age nine, children were able to identify a separate political world, consisting of some symbols, institutions and personalities, although their judgements were no more sophisticated than they had previously been. At age eleven or thereabouts, Connell found a noticeable increase in complexity of thought, a development which he calls the "construction of the political order." This complexity increased during the teens, so that adolescents formed "political outlooks which, despite some incoherencies and contradictions, had an inner unity and could be characterized as wholes."[21]

Underlying all these developments is the increasing intellectual capacity of adolescents. As Adelson puts it,

> The most important change that we find in the transition from early to middle adolescence is the achievement of abstractness. On the threshhold of adolescence the child adheres to the tangible: he is most comfortable (and capable) with the concrete event, the actual person . . . The older adolescent, however, can move from the concrete to the abstract and then back again.[22]

In short, Adelson's work suggests that cognitive development involves more than intellectual capacity only. It is not simply that we are teaching a concrete-operational child a subject which assumes, at least as it is commonly taught, formal-operational capacity. Cognitive capacity also influences the kind of thinking that students do in particular contexts. Not only can they not necessarily understand the kinds of concepts that we are trying to teach: they also have their own versions of these concepts — versions of which we may well be unaware.

Teachers immediately realize that words like "communism", "feudalism", "capitalism", "individualism", need careful definition, although it is sometimes assumed that if students can define such terms they also understand them. Not so obvious is the fact that everyday words like "law", "government", "king" and so on may not mean for students what we think they mean. Wood, for example, found four definitions of "king" in order of increasing maturity:

1) the king lives in a castle far away.
2) a king is somebody very important and a king is very rich, a famous man out of the royal family.
3) a king is the ruler of the country.
4) a person who may rule his country by himself, may rule it in co-ordination with advisers or a government, may simply be a figurehead.[23]

Other examples could be described but the point is clear: there is a developmental pattern.

However, before leaping to the conclusion that politics is simply too difficult a topic to teach to students, one important but often overlooked caveat should be noted. The research indicates what students, in fact, do, not what they are capable of doing, or might do under other circumstances. It may well be that students' thinking, especially in a classroom context when responding to classroom prob-

lems, is as much a response to the way they have been taught and to their expectations of the classroom as to any developmental factors.

E. A. Peel, for example, uses passages like this to evaluate students' thought processes:

> Only brave pilots are allowed to fly over high mountains. This summer a fighter pilot flying over the Alps collided with an aerial cableway, and cut a main cable causing some cars to fall to the glacier below. Several people were killed and many others had to spend the night suspended over the glacier.[24]

Students are then asked two questions: (1) Was the pilot a careful airman? (2) Why do you think so? Time and time again Peel and others have found that only a minority of students answer this passage satisfactorily by pointing out that more information is needed to make a valid judgement. They either argue that the pilot was careful because he (or she) was brave or state flatly that he (she) was not careful because a collision occurred. The question that remains, however, is this: do students fail to handle the question properly because of some developmental factor or because they are simply not accustomed to having to deal with open-ended questions in school? The classroom, after all, is one of the very few places in the world where, when someone asks a question, he or she already knows the answer. "What is the name of the Prime Minister, Fred?" is really a question asking whether Fred has done his homework, not for information; it is a way of checking on Fred, as he very well knows.

Further, the research to date has too often neglected Vygotsky's important distinction between youngsters' level of *actual* development and their *potential* level. Often what is known about students in the classroom is what they do do, not what they might potentially do. Vygotsky's caution against relying too strictly upon developmental research is well-taken: it runs the danger of making instruction follow developmental patterns rather than interact with them. For the teachers' job is surely to work in the zone between the actual and potential levels of development and to try to move students ever closer to their potential.

To illustrate what this means in practice, think back to the Grade VII student writing his essay on why Ancient Rome was not a democracy. Having written his essay, the youngster and his teacher talked somewhat as follows:

T: You mean that Canada isn't an exact democracy, either.
S: No! Of course Canada is a democracy. Everybody knows that!
T: Yes, but you've said Rome wasn't an exact democracy because people could only choose and elect officials. That's all we do in Canada. For instance, my member of parliament is Mr. X, but I didn't vote for him. The man I voted for lost the election. Is that democracy?
S: I don't know about that, but everybody knows that Canada is a democracy.
T: Well, what is a democracy anyway?
S: It is from two Greek words. It means "rule by the people." (N.B. the class had previously studied Ancient Greece and this information was in their textbook).
T: Such as?
S: Well, Athens.
T: O.K. Now, what about Rome?
S: Well, Rome was different. Its government wasn't the same as Athens.
T: Yes, but is it like Canada?
S: I don't know. The question didn't ask about Canada anyway.

T: Well, why do the Russians and the Chinese call themselves democratic? They say they're more democratic than we are. And Communist East Germany calls itself the German Democratic Republic. And, if you think back to Athens, why don't we run Canada like that?
S: You couldn't. There's too many people.
T: Yes, but you said it was a democracy.
S: Well, maybe democracy can mean different things.
T: Exactly.

Readers will have to take my word that this conversation took place. It shows a student operating between what Vygotsky called the levels of actual and potential development. And the same student's second attempt at the same question shows considerable movement.

> **Why The Government of Rome Wasn't A Democracy**
> Whether or not Rome was a democracy depends on your definition of the word democracy. If democracy means people actually ruling it was not a democracy. If it means people having the right to elect officials Rome was a democracy. After a long struggle the Plebeians acquired the right to elect Tribunes who would protect them from injustice from the Patricians. Eventually they gained the right to block acts of magistrates or senators. However, this was not a real democracy for the Plebeians were not actually ruling.
>
> Another important gain was a written statement telling Plebeians their rights but that didn't give them a democracy. Even after gaining their own assembly and having a Plebeian consul elected they were not ruling. Since no payment was granted for attendance Plebeians couldn't afford to waste their time at these meetings and turned to the important business of farming.
>
> Since a democracy requires most people taking part in meetings (and there wasn't even a real democracy in Rome) and the majority of people were Plebeians only a few of the rich could attend the meetings. The Plebeians, most of them at least, did not use their really non-existent power. The few rich people were not helping them and soon joined with the old aristocrats to form a new ruling class. I really do not think that the Plebeians had any more power than an average Canadian and Canada is called a democracy. Once again depending on your definition of democracy. The Plebeians started with no power and ended with virtually no power at all.

In short, while the developmental research tells us what students are currently doing, it does not tell us what they might do in different circumstances. In this regard, Vygotsky's distinction between levels of actual and potential development is crucial, as is his insistence that it is the teacher's job to operate between the two. The big danger of the developmental research is that it will lead teachers to pace their instruction so that it follows *after* the process of development rather than interacting with it.

Whatever the case, it is obvious that we should teach politics in ways that youngsters can understand. One approach to the whole question is to see politics as involving far more than government. To quote one political scientist,

> Politics is a basic human activity which makes its appearance wherever there are rules. It may be seen in a small compass in a tennis club or a dramatic society, and in its widest scope in the manoeuvrings of the cold war.[25]

Politics are about rules, which, of course, also imply power, authority, enforcement, obedience, resistance and so on. Politics then can be seen in the family, in the classroom, in interaction among friends. And no-one can deny that even young children know something about and have opinions about rules. Thus, Hodgetts and Gallagher urge us:

> . . . to capitalize on the everyday situations encountered by the children themselves which involve their own group decisions and choices. At home they encounter rules about their own conduct and at least sometimes share in the decisions made; at school and in the neighbourhood they encounter other rules determined in different ways . . . The informal analysis of such political situations are child related opportunities to develop understandings and senses of group responsibility and social obligation, of far more benefit than memorization of legalistic descriptions of government practices or abstract political concepts.[26]

In addition, one can make good use of games, role-playing, simulation and other "hands-on" strategies. In the Soviet Union, for example, kindergarten activities are so organized that children have to work together to complete them: building blocks are too large for one child to manage unaided so that co-operation becomes necessary and useful. To organize students to tackle school and community problems — litter, traffic, aid for the handicapped and so on — also has obvious political applications. In all cases, the important point is to make the learning experiential and to use it to lead into wider political issues.

A recent investigation of the possibilities of teaching politics in the elementary grades put forward these criteria:

1. Children should see the "political" in their everyday lives in family, school and so on.
2. Political education should deal with problems common to the world of the child and to the adult world of institutionalized politics.
3. Political education should link the study of problems to the development of behaviour.
4. Political education should reflect the many contexts of children's political learning (e.g. ways must be found of relating to parents, community groups, the media and so on).
5. The "hidden curriculum" of classroom organization and climate must be examined for its political messages.
6. Political education should reflect the fact that no one theory of learning satisfactorily explains the development of the child's political self. Thus, there is a place for social learning as well as cognitive learning, for modelling, reinforcement and the rest.
7. Political education should reflect the diversity of society.
8. Political education should recognize that children are becoming citizens of a global society as well as of their own country.[27]

Although intended for the elementary school, these criteria are equally applicable to the secondary grades. Obviously, as students get older, and certainly as they become capable of abstract thought, it will be necessary to introduce more intellectual sophistication into the programme. In particular, it will be necessary to give them some means to unravel the complexities of politics and to make it possible for them to analyse political events and issues that arise after they have finished with school. The obvious weakness of teaching students only about political institutions or contemporary issues is that they have been given nothing to help them understand events that arise in later years. What is needed is some analytical tool which will make this possible, of which more below.

In any event, there are at least three criteria to be met if students are to understand politics: one, that they should see the political in their everyday ordinary lives; two, that they should deal with problems common to both their world and to the adult world of politics; and three, that from this personal, experiential base they should arrive at an understanding of politics "in the big".

CHAPTER 3

PROGRAMME DESIGN AND THE TEACHING OF POLITICS

There are only a few political studies programmes in Canadian schools and those that do exist are options or electives at the senior high school level. The usual practice is for politics, or civics or whatever, to be taught *via* social studies, Canadian studies and, especially, history. In addition, although it is not always recognized, many other subjects carry a political message. In all classes, for example, there are certain established routines for maintaining order, discipline and authority. Similarly, students quickly learn what is expected of them and, more often than not, modify their behaviour accordingly. These "lessons" may well carry over into the political sphere. Some subjects also carry explicitly political messages. This is particularly the case in literature classes where books such as *1984*, *Brave New World* or *The Two Solitudes* are commonly on the curriculum. It is also the case, though less obviously, in subjects like mathematics where problems may be covered in terms of stocks and shares, interest rates, wages and salaries —all reflecting the norms of the economic system.

Even where politics form part of some other course — usually history — the teacher is still faced with problems of programme design. For example, is it best to make the political learning an integral part of the history programme (this will happen to some extent, in any event); or is it best to make it a separate, self-contained unit; or is some combination of the two best? One can easily envisage a history course that would be perfectly valid as history, but would at the same time be saturated with material relevant to an understanding of politics.

However it is done, the teaching of politics has to be organized in some way or other. It should not be left to become a series of lessons which have no sequence, no continuity and no apparent purpose. It has to avoid the danger of becoming little more than a catalogue of political facts. One of the difficulties of teaching politics in schools is that, for the vast majority of students, any political activity in which they become involved will occur after they have left school. From a student's viewpoint, politics is mostly in the future. Thus, it is important to teach politics in such a way that students will be able to use what they learn after they have learned it. This is all the more necessary because political knowledge changes over the years: institutions, personalities, problems come and go. It is crucial, therefore, to give students some key with which to unlock the complexities of politics.

One solution to this problem is to organize a programme not around political institutions but around issues. This possesses some obvious advantages: issues are, by definition, about conflicts and thus embody the central question of politics; they

can usually be made relevant to contemporary affairs and to students' own concerns; they embody controversy and argument and thus encourage a style of teaching which allows students to pursue their own opinions and arguments. The *Canadian Public Issues* programme, for example, has two major goals: one, to enhance students' understanding of Canada through "active discussion of its major social conflicts" and, two, to teach the "skills necessary for the analysis and discussion and resolution of such conflicts."[28] The notion that these conflicts are susceptible to 'resolution' in the classroom is rather optimistic, but analysis and discussion can certainly be achieved. The programme is organized around a series of contemporary issues in Canadian society, such as foreign ownership, censorship, the rights of youth. Beyond teaching youngsters the skills needed to analyse such problems, the programme also attempts to promote a sense of political efficacy by going beyond the usual questions of how? and why? to ask also, why should?

> In effect, the very asking of WHY SHOULD — questions involves the students in the decision-making process and in a sense forces students to become active participants in the decision-making process.[29]

The intent is laudable, although one wonders how exploring in a classroom what decisions should be made will, in fact, get students more actively involved in anything. To discuss what should be done about nuclear power, for example, is one thing; to have any kind of impact upon the actual decision-makers, even more to become an "active participant in the decision-making process", quite another.

A programme organized around issues is open to at least two objections: one, that it does not provide enough basic knowledge about political institutions, and two, that issues are often transitory and dissimilar so that learning how to analyse some issues may not transfer to others. The first can be overcome fairly simply for there is no obvious contradiction involved in incorporating some basic knowledge of institutions into an issue-based programme. The second is trickier but an answer is suggested by the example of the *Harvard Social Studies Project*, which uses what it calls 'persisting issues'. The argument is that topics that generate controversy today may be as dead as the dodo tomorrow or the day after, so that it is next to impossible to forecast what problems will arise during a person's lifetime. However, just about every conceivable political controversy revolves around a number of persisting issues which are as old as society itself. Two examples are the issues of the public interest vis-à-vis the private good and of cultural variety vis-à-vis the melting pot. The Harvard programme illustrates these persisting issues by means of case-studies, some of which are historical and some contemporary. For example, the development of railways in the nineteenth century U.S.A. becomes a case-study of private vs. public interests; the American War of Independence is used to illustrate the question of working inside or outside the law to bring about change; Nazi Germany raises questions of individual responsibility.

Both programmes envisage a particular kind of citizen, one who can handle issues rationally and objectively, who knows how to discuss, listen and argue, who thinks reflectively and who has a sense of social responsibility. This is to say that both programmes are more concerned with skills and dispositions than with knowledge as such. One may legitimately question whether any kind of programme that confines itself to the classroom, no matter how innovative, can achieve all this. To analyze, discuss and talk about an issue is one thing; to do something about it quite another. It is extremely doubtful whether one will lead to the other. Further, although a successful issues-based programme may indeed teach skills and disposi-

tions, it will not give students any general view of what politics is all about. Unless it is systematically taught, they will not learn what makes the political machinery tick.

This is also a problem, though to a lesser extent, with another organizational framework for political education programmes, one which uses not issues but concepts. Here the concern is to isolate the major concepts or fundamental ideas which will make sense of a large amount of detailed information. Most programmes that have done this have turned to the academic discipline of political science as the source of concepts. Fenton, for example, in a programme called *Comparative Political Systems,* organized it around five concepts: (1) political leadership; (2) institutions; (3) ideology; (4) decision-making and (5) citizenship. His argument was, and is, that such 'analytical concepts' enable one to make sense out of new information. Obviously, there is room for disagreement on just what the important concepts are and different programmes have made different choices. A programme called *Comparing Political Experiences* focusses on the broad concept of a political system and looks at four aspects of it: maintenance, development, conflict and change. In turn, these lead to the concepts of political activity (e.g. decision-making, participation, communication) and of political resources (influence, wealth, ideology and so on). Somewhat different, and as its name suggests, the programme in *American Political Behavior* looks not at systems but at behaviour: why people act and think as they do politically. It deals with the relationships between political behaviour and social forces and uses such concepts as political culture, political socialization, class and status, role and decision-making.

All these programmes turned to political science for their concepts. By contrast, a British programme has rejected this, preferring instead to use concepts deriving from 'common-sense': "we do not need to go beyond the language of everyday life to understand and participate in the politics of everyday life and all the things that affect it."[30] This programme, in 'political literacy', sees politics as consisting of three elements: (1) government, (2) the people and (3) the relationships between them.

The programme emphasizes not only understanding but participation:

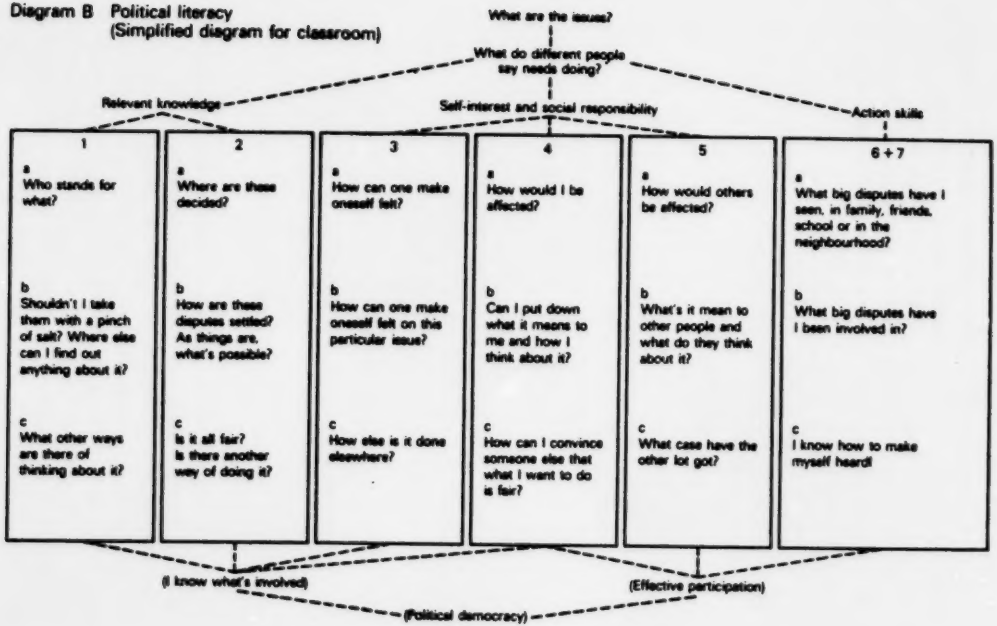
> To have achieved political literacy is to have learned what the main political disputes are about, what beliefs the main contestants have of them, how they are likely to affect you and me. It also means that we are likely to be predisposed to try to do something about the issue in question in a manner which is at once effective and respectful of the sincerity of other people and what they believe.[31]

Two parts of this definition are worth a special note: the reference to "the main political disputes" and the value placed on effective participation.

This orientation to political participation represents the most recent development in political education. It stems in large part from the research findings in political socialization that, at least in the secondary school, the conventional civics/social studies curriculum is having little or no impact. The most far-reaching proposals for a programme organized not so much around issues or concepts as around participation are contained in *Comparing Political Experiences,* whose goal is "to provide students with sufficient experience in analyzing and acting in political situations that they will develop habits of participation which will transfer into their everyday lives."[32] To this end, the programme combines the study of a number of important concepts with a carefully worked out system of training for and experience in political participation.

The unique aspect of *Comparing Political Experiences* is its careful working out of what is involved in political participation and in teaching it. It sees participation

Diagram B Political literacy
(Simplified diagram for classroom)


What are the issues?
What do different people say needs doing?
Relevant knowledge
Self-interest and social responsibility
Action skills
1
a
Who stands for what?
b
Shouldn't I take them with a pinch of salt? Where else can I find out anything about it?
c
What other ways are there of thinking about it?
2
a
Where are these decided?
b
How are these disputes settled? As things are, what's possible?
c
Is it all fair? Is there another way of doing it?
3
a
How can one make oneself felt?
b
How can one make oneself felt on this particular issue?
c
How else is it done elsewhere?
4
a
How would I be affected?
b
Can I put down what it means to me and how I think about it?
c
How can I convince someone else that what I want to do is fair?
5
a
How would others be affected?
b
What's it mean to other people and what do they think about it?
c
What case have the other lot got?
6 + 7
a
What big disputes have I seen, in family, friends, school or in the neighbourhood?
b
What big disputes have I been involved in?
c
I know how to make myself heard!
(I know what's involved)
(Effective participation)
(Political democracy)

from B. Crick & A. Porter, *Political Education and Political Literacy*, London: Longmans, 1978, p. 43

as depending upon possession of a range of skills and thus demanding careful training. The project specifies that students be trained how to act as observers, supporters, advocates, facilitators and organizers in group-settings. In addition, they learn and apply the skills involved in decision-making, bargaining, task-implementation and conflict-management. Having learned and practised these skills in carefully supervised, non-threatening environments, students then practise them in various school settings (clubs, committees, and so on). Eventually, they have to move outside the school and practise what they have been taught in various community settings. To put this another way, students begin the programme by learning how to analyse and participate in the politics of the school (C.P.E. sees the school as a "political laboratory"), and then by way of a carefully gradated series of experiences move out into the politics of the community.

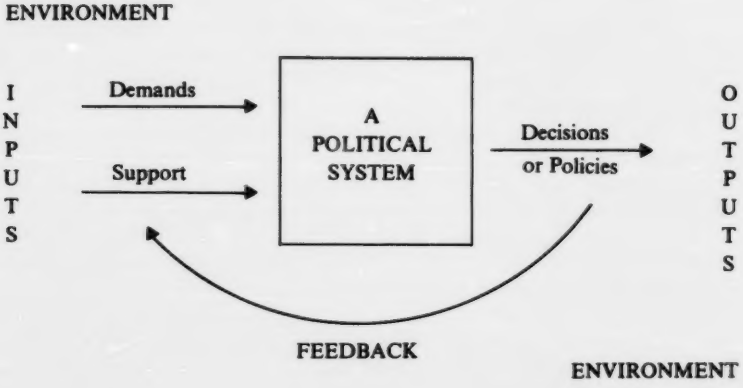
All these projects share certain common features and have much to say to anyone interested in the teaching of politics. It is clear that political education, as understood in recent years, has become very different from old-style civics. These differences can best be represented in tabular form as depicted on page 21.

This review of recent projects in the teaching of politics contains a number of useful lessons. For example, one needs to have some conception of politics in order to be sure what it is that one should be teaching. All of these projects see politics in terms of conflict and its management, a mundane enough point, but one which many textbooks still avoid. Secondly, one needs to have some kind of conceptual framework upon which to base the curriculum, in order to avoid a headlong dash into descriptions of political institutions which more often than not serve simply to confuse students. Third, the academic discipline of political science can serve as an invaluable source of information and insight in connection with both the previous points. This is even more important than it seems, given the fact that many of the teachers charged with teaching politics in schools have little or no political science training, being trained either as elementary school teachers or as history teachers. This, of course, is not to say that history is not a valuable — indeed, a necessary — component of any political education worth the name, but all of the projects reviewed here relied on political science for many of their concepts and approaches. At least by implication, these projects also contain a fourth lesson: most probably teachers will have to choose where to put their emphasis. No curriculum can ever provide enough time and opportunity to do everything, whether in politics or anything else. There are, for example, at least three separate approaches exemplified in these projects: issues, concepts and action.

There is, however, a fourth approach which may have more to offer than any of these three and this is to organize a programme around the idea of a political system. The best known version of a systems approach is that of Professor David Easton. At its simplest, Easton sees political systems as a process by which inputs are converted into outputs, with these outputs in turn influencing further inputs. For example, any political system has two kinds of inputs: one, demands made by citizens that some decision or another should be made (or annulled), and two, a generalized feeling of support for or opposition to the system. In a Canadian context, there are obviously many kinds of demands being made in the political arena and these demands will often turn into political issues. At the same time there is a high level of general support (or diffuse support, as Easton calls it) for the political system of parliamentary democracy so that, even when people's demands are not satisfied, they continue to support it. In other societies, of course, this may not be at all the case, so that dissatisfied demands lead to alienation from, rejection of and even struggle to overthrow the whole system. Thus, one can envisage a five-step model of political analysis: one, the environment within which the politi-

cal system exists and which influences people's attitudes to and expectations of it; two, the inputs which enter the system; three, the process of converting inputs into outputs (i.e. policy formulation, decision-making and so forth); four, the outputs of the system, in the form of decisions and policies; and five, the feedback process by which these decisions and policies create further inputs.

Diagrammatically, it all looks something like this:



This has obvious appeal as a teaching device, since students can apply it to any political system, past, present and future, and, in consequence, have a key for unlocking the complexity of events. For instance, the diagram has proved to be useful in helping students conceptualize and make some sense out of the confusion of events (as they see it) that go to making the French Revolution. To put the language of inputs and outputs into Lasswell's terms: the key questions are who wants what? How do they go about getting it? And what happens when they get, or do not get, it?

Easton went further than this and elaborated upon what he saw as the fundamental ideas (the "structure") of political science. In summary, they are these:

1. People in a society have many wants.
2. Some of these wants are matters for the political system (as opposed, say, to the family system, the economic system, etc.).
3. As wants enter the political system, they become political demands.
4. These demands are screened by "gatekeepers" (e.g. trades unions, political parties, interest groups, etc.). Some are screened out, but others go on to become political issues.
5. These issues are affected by existing cleavages in the political arena so that people take sides and form opinions.
6. The authorities translate these issues into binding decisions (laws, policies, etc.). In this context, a decision not to do anything on an issue remains a binding decision.
7. These decisions create positive or negative support for different levels of the system. In this regard, Easton usefully distinguishes between the political community (e.g. the national group, the country or region); the regime (i.e. the particular political or constitutional apparatus) and the authorities (i.e. those who happen to be in power).

8. Also, these decisions generate new wants which seek once again to enter the political system.

Here, then, is an attempt to simplify and clarify the fundamental ideas of political science so that they can be adapted for school curricula. In particular, it is an attempt to elucidate the concept of a political *system*, as opposed to some of the other projects discussed in this section which concentrate rather on issues, problems or concepts. The underlying supposition is that if students learn to analyze one political system they will know how to analyze others, thus reducing and simplifying the complexity of politics.

Traditional Civics	Recent Approaches to Political Education
Concentrates on government to the neglect of other aspects of politics	Concentrates on politics and the political system of which government is only a part
Emphasizes the formal structure and institutions of government	Emphasizes political processes and behaviour — the political culture
Focusses on government at the federal and provincial levels; has a 'macro-orientation'.	Includes local and 'informal' political contexts (e.g. the school, the family, the community).
Describes the ideal of what is supposed happen	Describes what actually or really happens
Stresses consensus; downplays or avoids conflict	Sees conflict (which is not the same as violence) as the core of politics
Emphasizes factual knowledge and the one right answer	Emphasizes personal opinion and argument
Relies mostly on conventional teaching methods (textbook; chalk and talk; etc.)	Uses discovery/inquiry strategies. Increasing attention being paid to action-projects.
Tends to avoid current controversies; reluctant to bring politics into the classroom	Emphasizes current controversies either as worth studying in their own right or as examples of enduring themes.
Uses commonsense categories and knowledge; relies heavily on history	Turns to the academic discipline of political science for concepts and insights
Sees 'good citizenship' as a set of specific virtues to be inculcated.	Sees 'good citizenship' as a topic for analysis and debate, although insists upon certain procedural values
Postulates the informed voter as the most desirable model of political participation	Goes beyond voting to more active forms of participation
Largely ignores the impact of the hidden curriculum (school rules, classroom climate, teacher attitudes; etc.)	Is very conscious of the impact of the hidden curriculum and works to remodel it
Promotes (often implicitly) obedience, trust, conformity	Promotes personal autonomy; efficacy, a critical spirit, a suspicion of power-holders
Tends to avoid normative questions of what might be, avoids value-issues	Emphasizes value-issues; raises normative and ethical concerns

Obviously, the concept of a political system especially if it is expressed in pure Eastonian language, will not hold the interest of most school students. It is too abstract for them to understand without some concrete aids. The technical language of interest articulation; interest aggregation; regulative, extractive, distributive and responsive functions; and all the rest are clearly of little service in the classroom. This is, of course, no criticism of the political scientists themselves. They are not writing for school students. However, it is important to turn their insights into language that youngsters can understand. The goal is to enable students to understand how political systems work, and for this they need some vehicle by which to arrive at the abstract ideas involved. For this purpose, issues and problems are extremely useful.

The obvious drawback to studying issues for their own sake is that, with some exceptions, they will not last forever. What is relevant and contemporary this year may well not be two or three years from now. For example, the Pearson government's decision to introduce a distinctively Canadian flag in 1965 was a burning issue in its day. It needed a very strong-minded teacher indeed to avoid it. The media gave it prominence; *Hansard* was full of it for weeks; many and various groups had their say; Prime Minister Pearson was given a rough but newsworthy reception at a Legion convention; and so on. However, any students who studied it will have learned little of ultimate value unless the issue was set in a much wider context of political analysis — unless, in short, the flag issue was treated as a case-study of, say, political conflict or decision-making. On its own, it was interesting but not likely to tell students very much about how politics works.

To argue that the concept of political system should be the foundation of a politics curriculum is not, of course, to argue for the traditional rehearsal of the institutions of government which for so long characterized civics. Rather, what is being argued here is that we need some analytical framework to help students understand how political systems work. Upon this framework, they can then build whatever specific structure they wish to examine: Soviet, American, Canadian and the rest. The point is that they should see the forest despite all the trees. The aim is that they acquire a key to unlock whatever political mysteries they encounter.

All these considerations point to David Easton's approach to the analysis of political systems as being worthy of serious examination. Admittedly, the model has to be simplified to the point where a self-respecting political scientist may cringe in horror, but simplification lies at the heart of good teaching. And, in its essentials, stripped down to the bare bones, Easton's analysis is both simple and persuasive. Just as important, experience — albeit personal rather than scientific — suggests that it can work with students. The essentials, as described earlier, are five:

1. The *environment* within which the political system exists and with which it interacts.
2. The *inputs* that enter the political system.
3. The *conversion process* by which the inputs are turned into outputs.
4. The *outputs* of the political system.
5. The *feedback loop* by which those outputs in turn create further inputs or modify existing inputs.

The language is rather arid. It might be helpful to see what is involved in practice. What follows is not exhaustive and could certainly be presented differently but it does indicate how the examination of a political issue can be used to show the workings of the political system. In the long run, hopefully, students will then learn to apply the analytical framework themselves. The basic idea is that an issue arises in the environment, becomes an input into the political system and is then con-

verted into an output wich has further impact upon the environment — and so on. Here, then, is a checklist of questions which students should be taught to apply:

1. *The Environment*
1. Why is the subject an issue at all? What is there in society at large that makes this particular topic (say capital punishment) an issue at this particular time? For instance, is there a precipitating incident? Do the media draw attention to the issue? Does some group or individual agitate upon it for whatever reason?
2. What are the stands taken on the issue? Who holds what viewpoints? What group identifications are noticeable — e.g. by class, religion, ethnicity, occupation, region, etc? Why do people take the stands they do — e.g. the influence of parents, friends, church, media, etc? What functions do opinions and attitudes serve for those who hold them — e.g. prestige, group-identification, scapegoating, reduction of dissonance, etc?

2. *Inputs*
1. How does the issue enter the political arena? For example, what pressure-groups exist and how do they operate? Do the media have a role? What part is played by politicians and political parties (e.g. do they take up an issue and promote it)?
2. Once the issue is in the political arena, what happens? For example, what alliances are formed? What arguments are advanced? What is done to publicize the issue or some group's view of it.
3. What demands are made for government action? How? By whom?
4. What are people's general feelings about both the government and the political system? How do these feelings affect their thinking and acting on a particular issue?

3. *The Conversion of Inputs into Outputs*
1. What is the response of those in power? For example, do they try to ignore the issue, to block it, to take a stand, to find a compromise, to seek a way out?
2. Who is in power anyway? Who are the decision-makers: elected representatives or permanent officials? Which particular members of the decision-making groups have influence and why?
3. What forces influence those in power? For example, how were they recruited? What is their background? To whom do they listen? What considerations other than the issue itself do they have to worry about?
4. What are the procedures — official and unofficial — by which decisions are made?

4. *Output*
1. What decision (law, policy, etc.) finally emerges?

5. *Feedback*
1. How does this decision affect the various groups initially involved? For example, are they satisfied? Do they undertake further action?
2. How does this decision affect people not previously involved? For example, people who did not care too much about the original issue may have very strong feelings about the decision made to settle it. If so, what happens?
3. How does the decision affect the decision-makers? For example, is their political future more or less certain? How are they perceived by the people at large? Are their bases of support altered, strengthened, weakened?
4. How does the decision affect the political system at large? Is people's faith in the system affected? Do they support it less or more? What further demands are created?

Not for a minute is it suggested that this outline and all the questions it contains are either especially elegant or exhaustive. Indeed, the questions and subquestions can be multiplied almost indefinitely. Nonetheless, whatever its imperfections, the approach does suggest a way by which students can be led from the study of some particular issues to a wider consideration of how a political system works and, along the way, they will also necessarily consider various dimensions of political behaviour.

At its best, this approach may give students an intellectual grasp of politics; it will enhance their understanding and insight. It will not, however, do anything directly to develop any sense of political efficacy, let alone lead to greater political participation. One may reasonably assume that no course of study by itself will achieve this. Rather, as argued earlier, political efficacy and competence are aspects of a wider sense of personal effectiveness and this is achieved not so much by studying anything as by acting upon things. It is this that makes how we teach politics to students as important as what we teach them and to these questions of teaching strategies we now turn.

CHAPTER 4
TEACHING STRATEGIES

The very nature of politics demands that we prefer certain approaches over others. If, for example, we take democratic principles seriously, then politics are a matter for investigation, discussion and analysis, not for authoritative declaration or pronunciamento. In short, the lecture method may well be appropriate when students have to learn some factual information, or when they need to have a point of view explained, but sooner or later they will have to do their own investigating, to form — and, more important, to test — their own opinions. To return to an earlier point, politics are about differences and conflict and thus presume argument and discussion. It is not so much a matter of whether discussion is more or less effective than lecture (and one may legitimately ask: effective for what?), as that the subject matter and the very nature of politics demand discussion and inquiry.

In the same way, methods which will make the abstractions of politics more intelligible and accessible to students are urgently necessary. As noted earlier, researchers have drawn some very depressing conclusions about the effectiveness of political education unless we undertake substantial changes in curriculum and methodology. To continue doing the same old thing is self-defeating. Thus, there is a strong case to be made, especially in the teaching of politics, for such techniques as simulation, gaming, role-playing and direct participation in politics. At the same time, it is obvious that teachers have more than merely a cognitive impact upon students. When people think back to their schooldays, they commonly remember their teachers not for what they taught, but for the kind of people they were. The specifics are quickly forgotten, but an important residue remains. There is, then, a case for arguing that teachers' personal styles, the way in which they treat their students, the atmosphere they establish in their classrooms — that all these things influence not so much what students learn, but rather their overall attitude towards learning and, in part, towards themselves and others and, therefore, influence in some degree their feelings of efficacy and competence. In this connection, it is useful to keep in mind the Almond and Verba suggestion that adult commitment to and participation in the democratic process were correlated with "democratic" practices in schooling. To put all this another way: it is not so much the specific teaching technique that is important, as the spirit that informs it.

There is some evidence — even if it is not much more than a glimmer — that teaching styles can make a difference. Sarah Lightfoot, for example, in a fascinating study, has argued that teachers' world-views shape their philosophies which, in

turn, shape their conceptions of good teaching and hence influence what they do in their classrooms.[34] She describes two teachers, one of whom could best be described as conservative, the other as mildly radical. The first, Teacher A, felt that the "system" was generally fair and open and that people could succeed within it if they wanted to. She was critical of "permissiveness" and "lack of standards" and believed that much could be done if only people would work and apply themselves. Teacher B, on the other hand, felt that the "system" was essentially unjust, rewarding the privileged and penalizing the unprivileged. For her the important thing was not to do well in the system, for that was by definition impossible for most people anyway, but to change it. These views, these political philosophies (for that is really what they were) translated themselves into classroom practice. Teacher A, for example, with her belief in hard work and getting ahead, emphasized orderliness, decorum, authority. Teacher B, although by no means a Summerhill disciple, gave more attention to student-initiated activities and to student participation. Thus, students spent more time working at their desks on their own for Teacher A than they did for Teacher B. Lightfoot found that these patterns revealed themselves in the students' behaviour: "the approach and responsiveness of the children . . . reflected the educational goals and political philosophies that were unconsciously and explicitly expressed by their teachers." In brief, she found the students of Teacher B to be more creative, discriminating, confident and critical.

It should be emphasized that Teacher B was not a "permissive" teacher, nor could she be described as a follower of progressive education, as that term has come to be generally understood. Within her classroom, she maintained certain procedures and a certain structure. But within this, she gave her students a fair amount of autonomy and of activity. Neville Bennett's research in England suggests that the more formal the teaching, the more students progress. In some quarters this has been interpreted as evidence for a return to traditional practices (although one should add it is not always clear just what they are). Often overlooked is Bennett's discussion of an "informal" classroom in which students did very well academically. His conclusion is worth quoting:

> Although the classroom was evidently orientated towards informal practices the content of the curriculum was clearly organized and well structured. This would seem to highlight a distinction between how the learning environment is structured, on the one hand, and the emphasis and structure of curriculum content, on the other.[35]

Lightfoot's Teacher B would seem to fit this pattern perfectly and nicely exemplifies Bennett's distinction between informality in the learning environment and formality in the structure of curriculum. And in this lies an important message for the teacher of politics: to advocate discussion, simulation, role-playing — in short, to urge the importance of experiential, active learning — is not to preach a message of "anything goes". The point is obvious but yet still needs to be made since educational debate very quickly turns to labels and stereotypes. John Bremer described it well when he said that teaching consisted of two tasks: first, to create order, and then to create disorder. The first is necessary because everyone needs some kind of structure or order. There has to be, so to speak, a framework within which to operate. If this is all, however, there will be little learning. The framework will become a cage. Thus, the teacher needs also to create disorder within the wider framework, to raise questions, to set problems — in short, to create the conditions within which students will begin to use their minds actively.

All too often, however, the operating assumption in many classrooms seems to be that children are ignorant. This, it is assumed, is why they are compelled to

attend school: to become informed — which usually means learning what their teachers already know. Certainly, acquiring knowledge is an important part of education. No one can properly be called educated if he or she knows nothing. At the same time, it is important to remember that knowledge is precisely *a part* of education, not the whole of it. A. N. Whitehead's dictum is rather strong, but it is worth remembering: "The merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth." Teaching can be said to consist of information-giving and problem-posing but too often the first excludes the second.

Thus, the crucial task is too easily seen as giving children useful knowledge. At best, what they do know — be it about license-plates, war-games, animals, music, sports or whatever — is seen as inferior knowledge. After all, if it were not inferior, it would be on the curriculum. If it is not there, then by definition in school terms it is not worth knowing.

This is misguided on two counts. First, it automatically downgrades students. Their ideas and experience are seen as of little importance. Think, for instance, of the implications of that all too frequent teacher response to a student answer: "No, that's not really what I'm thinking of." What the student wants to say is not all that important; it is what the teacher thinks that matters. This is poor teaching by any standard. In a subject like politics, it is deadly. The whole point is that students should learn to dissect an issue, to look at a range of viewpoints, to speak their mind, not to sit like the R.C.A. Victor dog waiting for "His Master's Voice."

Second, it ignores the obvious fact that, thanks to the mass media and the increasing mobility of families, children in fact know a surprising amount. James Coleman has distinguished between an information-poor and an information-rich society, pointing out that schools emerged in the former and served to provide the young with a window on the world. In an information-poor society the school is a major source of information. A hundred years ago (or less), for example, it was largely in school that youngsters found out about the wider world they lived in. Thus, schools served an expository, information-dispensing function. Today, however, we live in an information-rich society with the young getting vast amounts of information from non-school sources. Despite this shift, the school continues to function above all as a dispenser of information. To some extent, of course, it must do so, but not to the exclusion of its problem-posing role.

Part of the solution is to redefine the role of students. They have to cease being the more or less passive recipients of someone else's information and begin to see their own ideas as worth examining. For if we have often persuaded ourselves that youngsters know very little that is worth knowing we have at the same time persuaded the youngsters themselves that this is indeed true. Unless they refuse to play the school game, they quickly come to see themselves as consumers of information. Hence that all too familiar question: "Will this be on the test?"

We need to take seriously the implications of this definition of relevance:

> Relevance is not a matter of adapting a subject to the apparent interests of a pupil or to the apparent fashions of the moment. Relevance is achieved by assuming that a pupil or student has something to contribute to the subject. Relevance at its deepest has nothing to do with subject matter; it has to do with the status of the learner in relation to what is being learned.[36]

Assuming that a student has something to contribute can work wonders, but it is not just a matter of blind faith. Obviously, classroom climate and quality of teacher-student relationships are vital. There are, generally speaking, three ingre-

dients in successful teaching: expertise in one's subject, pedagogical skill and empathy with students. If this last quality is missing, then students will obviously be unwilling to contribute much of anything.

It is important to work with what students already know — and, as argued earlier, if one thinks of politics in conceptual terms as power, authority, obligation, rights, fairness and the rest, then there is no problem in linking politics to what even young children know. They all have some ideas about and experience of rules, authority, power, protest and such like.

In addition to this, one needs to organize teaching in terms of problems to be explored (not solved, but explored), rather than facts to be learned. All of this has been well summarized by Northrop Frye in one brief sentence: "the difference between a good and a mediocre teacher lies mainly in the emphasis the former puts on the exploring part of the mind."[37]

Politics, however, is not a matter of knowledge alone. Obviously, knowledge is an important component of political literacy, competence or whatever one chooses to call it, but, on its own, it is not enough. The acquisition of political knowledge, for example, has no necessary connection whatsoever with support for democratic principles, nor with political participation. For this reason, Hodgetts and Gallagher emphasize not knowledge for its own sake but "understandings that should help them (i.e. students) as citizens to participate constructively in the civic, — that is, the public life — of Canada."[38]

What is needed, then, is a problem-posing approach to teaching (to use Paolo Freire's term) as opposed to an information-dispensing one. To do otherwise is to ignore the evidence that styles of teaching and of classroom organization can have a political impact. It is also to reject the very essence of politics, to ignore the fact that politics are a matter of issues and problems not of authoritative pronouncements or dogma.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHING THROUGH DISCUSSION

Open discussion is indispensable in the teaching of politics. There is nothing new in this, of course. Teachers have been teaching through discussion ever since teaching began. For over two thousand years Socrates has been held up as the epitome of the good teacher, although the sceptic may be forgiven for thinking that Socrates' discussions were really more like camouflaged interrogations.

At the same time, discussion has become a word with a meaning to suit every occasion. It is used (or misused) to describe a method wherein the teacher intersperses a lecture with a few questions, or allows students to voice a few random comments. Often it is used to describe what is really a casual conversation among teachers and students. It can be used to describe exchanges of opinion which are really exchanges of ignorance from which no-one learns anything. And so on. And even at this, teachers often report that classroom discussions are not as good as they might be.

There are doubtless many reasons for this. If, for example, students enter a classroom in mid-afternoon, having already had five or six classes, only to find that their teacher wants them to engage in sparkling discussion upon some topic in which they have next to no interest, it will not be surprising if discussion fizzles out.

Despite such difficulties, however, there are still some things that can be done. The most obvious, and yet the most neglected, is to teach students how to discuss. Given the popularity of discussion with teachers (whatever they may mean by the term), it is surprising how little time is spent in teaching students how to do it. In the case of other skills — note-making, summarizing, essay-writing — it is recognized that students will have to be taught how to do them, that they must be given plenty of practice, but discussion is somehow supposed to occur spontaneously.

Before looking at this point more fully, however, there remains one other consideration. The first and indispensable step to fostering effective discussion is to establish an appropriate classroom climate. There is no point expecting students to enter into open and spirited discussion if they think that their opinions will not be taken seriously, or if they are afraid of being ridiculed — be it by their teacher or by other students, or if they have no interest in what they are doing.

For this reason, it may be useful to spend a little time on the question of classroom climate, especially in view of the evidence that much political learning occurs through the "hidden" curriculum and that the main political values conveyed are those of passivity, conformity and obedience. If, indeed, political com-

petence and efficacy are components of a more general sense of personal competence, and if this is at least in part influenced by what happens in the classroom, then clearly classroom climate is a matter of some importance.

Surprisingly, the educational literature has remarkably little to say on this subject. A search of one Faculty of Education library catalogue revealed no titles whatsoever under the heading "Classroom Climate". However, there were no less than one hundred and two titles listed under "Classroom Management" and nearly all of them were concerned with discipline in the coercive sence. Here are some of the more picturesque titles, although their message is representative of the whole range: *Changing Student Behaviour; A New Approach To Discipline; Help! These Kids Are Driving Me Crazy!; Survival Kit For Teachers; Making It Till Friday.* Certainly, discipline is important; no teacher needs to be told that. But there is an obvious problem of imbalance here. The subject-heading "Classroom Climate" did not even exist in the library card catalogue, but in contrast, there were one hundred and two entries under "Classroom Management." The message of these books can best be summarized by a quotation from one of them:

> The majority of these classroom rules, like the rules which govern our society, are designed for the common good. In order for large groups of people to live within a limited area, each individual must be socialized to certain rules of conduct or behavior. The teacher's source of control is directly dependent upon her ability to make rules and enforce the student's compliance with the rules."

Amazingly, this passage is from a book which carries the title *Humanizing Classroom Discipline.* Its political message is obvious: the key words are 'socialized', 'control', 'enforce,' 'compliance'.

There are three obvious factors in classroom climate: the teacher, the students and the physical setting of the classroom. The teacher's contribution can, in turn, be broken down into four components: personality, status, role and skills. Similarly, students' contributions can be seen as consisting of their attitude to each other, to the teacher and perhaps to the subject and the school generally.

So far as teachers' personalities are concerned, it seems that some personality traits are better than others when it comes to establishing a good classroom climate. Teachers have been described, for instance, as either dominative or integrative. The former type works against students and is very much concerned with personal power and authority. The dominative teacher issues orders, controls ideas, uses threat and blame and avoids exchange of opinions with students. In contrast, the integrative teacher works with students, uses requests and suggestions rather than orders, consults students and encourages the exchange of ideas. The evidence is — and one thinks of the work of Sarah Lightfoot described earlier — that students' behaviour changes according to the teacher's style.

There is some similarity here with the work of Carl Rogers who has suggested that teachers who work best with students all possess certain traits. They are "real" and do not hide behind any kind of teacher mask. They value and trust their students and empathize with them. They work on the assumption that students want to learn and learn best when they see what they are learning as relevant to their own goals.

All this overlaps with the status of the teacher. Clearly, dominative teachers will see and enforce a status different from that of their integrative colleagues. It seems reasonable that teachers who set themselves up as authority figures in their classrooms, either as disciplinarians or as academic experts, will find it difficult to get students to take discussion seriously. In the first case, students will not have been encouraged to participate in lessons. In the second, they will feel they have nothing

worth contributing in view of their teacher's encyclopaedic knowledge. One of the trickier problems in teaching is that facing teachers who wish to convey their knowledge of and enthusiasm for their subject without overwhelming their students, but of this more below.

As with status, so with role: teachers will find it necessary to adopt a variety of roles in the classroom. What is important is to be able to adopt different roles as circumstances require. Professor Bruce Joyce, for example, has described a range of teaching "models" and the roles and strategies they require, including group-investigation, jurisprudential approaches, social inquiry, laboratory methods, concept attainment, inductive approaches, inquiry training, synectics, awareness training, and others. His whole discussion is well worth pursuing by anyone interested in widening his or her teaching repertoire.[40] Herbert Thelen has described seven ways of organizing teaching, all of which require the teacher to assume a different role. These are, and the terms are self-explanatory: Socratic discussion; town meeting; apprenticeship; the army model; business deal; the good old team; the guided tour.

As teachers need to be able to move among a variety of roles, so it goes without saying they need to have at their command a wide range of skills. Flanders, for example, has argued that the skills of what he calls "indirect" teaching produce a more positive classroom climate than does "direct" teaching. Specifically, these skills include accepting, clarifying and supporting students' ideas and feelings; praising and encouraging; asking questions to encourage participation and to solicit ideas. Conversely, direct teaching includes lecturing, giving orders, criticizing, justifying one's own authority. Other skills that might help improve classroom climate include the ability to build teaching upon problems that students see as worthwhile; to provide for student participation; to cater to different styles of learning; to provide a wide range of student resources. The list could go on and on, but the point is clear: there are skills that teachers can learn and apply which can influence classroom climate. In this regard, Steven Bossert's work is of interest. He has noted that different teaching strategies produce their own imperatives, forcing teachers to act and students to react in certain ways. For example, teaching a whole class together *via* recitation or some such technique makes it difficult to provide individual assistance to students since it is awkward to hold up the whole class for one student. Further, in such whole-class approaches, high achievers dominate teachers' attention, since they are usually able to answer the questions, volunteer information and so on. Again, teaching a whole class means that teachers have to provide a uniform, publicly visible system of authority; when misbehaviour occurs it has to be corrected in view of the whole class and this makes if difficult to apply any personal touch. In addition, it means that students cannot have their misbehaviour explained or discussed since the whole class could be held up. Thus, the teacher becomes the impersonal enforcer of universal rules, rather than the more personal explainer of misconduct. Further, the teaching of a whole class together makes it impossible for teachers to become involved in activity as participants with their pupils. By contrast, a classroom organization which allows for students to work on a variety of tasks at different levels makes it possible for teachers to work with students in a much more personal way. The point of Bossert's argument is not to show that one approach is in some way better than another, but that different teaching strategies produce different effects, including effects on teacher-student relationships which are so important in establishing classroom climate: "the task organization of these classrooms influenced the method of control and the extent of teacher involvement in task activities, which, in turn, affected the development of empathic relationships."[41]

Teachers, then, through their personality, status, role and skills, play an important part in establishing classroom climate. So, of course, do students. They have their own agenda, their own definition of the situation. Their attitudes to each other, to school and to the subject they are studying, to their teacher — all affect what happens in the classroom. It often happens that a student teacher goes into his or her first class full of bright and wonderful ideas only to meet the stone wall of student resistance. Over the years, students build up their definition of what teaching is and it is not something that can be quickly overcome. If, for example, students have come to define teachers as people who give notes and who lecture a great deal, they will not adjust very quickly to someone who wants them to begin role-playing. To no-one's surprise, there are no magic solutions to the problems of leading such students to redefine their expectations. There are, however, some goals to work towards. First, a more positive climate will exist to the extent that students feel they have some voice in what is happening in the class. To put it another way, leadership is best when it comes from the group and not just from the teacher. Secondly, students need to feel that they are accepted by each other and by their teacher. Third, there should be a reasonably broad definition of what is acceptable behaviour, so that there is not a constant niggling about unnecessary rules. Fourth, there should be a reasonable amount of communication among students.

Finally, before this becomes an examination of classroom climate rather than the teaching of politics (but one is essential to the other), it is self-evident that the physical arrangements of a room can help or hinder the maintenance of classroom climate. In *What Culture? What Heritage?* Hodgetts stressed the value of properly equipped rooms and drew attention to their rarity. He noted that "it is more than coincidence that almost all of the outstanding Canadian studies lessons we observed were held in history or social studies *laboratories*."[42] (emphasis mine). It would be redundant to labour this point, but no discussion of classroom climate can be complete without drawing attention to it.

To return to the starting-point: an appropriate classroom climate is fundamental to successful discussion. Even with it, discussion will not work unless students know how to discuss and this involves deliberate teaching. Even then, of course, success is not guaranteed. As in music, careful training and rehearsal may prevent a flop but they do not guarantee a triumph.

As with any teaching technique, stage-setting is vitally important. Discussion often fails to get moving, for example, because the initial question is posed in far too general terms. "What do you think of the women's movement?" is, at best, likely to provoke only a series of one-liners in response: "You tell us"; "It's dumb"; "I like women"; and so on. To avoid this, it is best to begin with a specific incident, preferably something recent and in the news, so that discussion begins with personal reactions to and opinions about a concrete episode which, at the same time, raises more general questions. To stay with the example of the women's movement, for example, it would be useful to find one or more news-stories dealing with, say, sexual harassment in the workplace; a woman's being refused a job because of her sex; a comment that women are not suited to certain managerial positions (to use examples to be found in the newspapers at the time of writing). All things being equal, students will discuss the specifics of such incidents quite sensibly and once this has begun, it is not difficult to broaden the discussion out into the more general issues that they raise. The important considerations are that, first, it is an issue about which students can reasonably be expected to have opinions. It would not be of much use, for example, to ask them to discuss the implications of Louis Riel's execution, unless they already knew something about

it. This, of course, is why contemporary issues which make some connection with students' experience are so useful. Secondly, however, the issue, although contemporary and specific, although connected with students' experience, must be susceptible to a broader treatment. One must be able to use the issue as a doorway through which to enter the broader questions of justice, fairness, equality, authority and such fundamental political concepts.

These comments apply especially to the type of ad-hoc and often fairly short discussions that a teacher might initiate at the beginning of a class in order to get things moving. Once students have become used to this, they will themselves begin such discussions by asking questions about something that has happened. At times such discussions can assume considerable momentum. More common, however, and certainly more formal, are those discussions which are pre-planned as part of a teaching strategy. In these cases, students are commonly assigned to read something in order to have something to discuss.

In either case, the ad-hoc or the planned, once discussion begins certain rules come into play, although they should not be over-zealously enforced. These rules imply the existence of certain skills, and both rules and skills have to be deliberately taught if discussion is to be effective. One of the most useful attempts to do this is Fawcett Hill's formulation of the Group Cognitive Map. Here, a discussion group, having done some assigned reading, works its way through nine steps:

1. Definition of terms and concepts.
2. General statement of author's message.
3. Identification of major themes and sub-topics.
4. Allocation of time to be allotted for discussion of different topics.
5. Discussion of themes and sub-topics.
6. Integration of material with other knowledge.
7. Application of the material.
8. Evaluation of author's arguments.
9. Evaluation of group and individual performance.[43]

These nine steps are taught and applied systematically — even dogmatically when a group is first beginning — until they become almost second nature. They can be modified to suit one's particular purposes. For example, a less elaborate version is:

1. Summary (in one's own words) of author's message.
2. Identification of major themes and sub-topics.
3. Discussion of themes and sub-topics.
4. Integration of the material with existing knowledge.
5. Application of the material.
6. Evaluation of the author's message.

As a group becomes familiar with this approach it becomes less and less necessary to worry about each specific step. Experienced groups can often telescope steps, interchange them, and generally treat the whole process with a good deal of flexibility. No matter what, one point is crucial: initially, the steps must be very deliberately taught and applied.

The skills of discussion can be broken down into three categories: discussion-flow; group interaction; and debating skills. The first, discussion-flow, includes both the logical and the organizational components of discussion; the second deals with the various roles that people might assume in a group; the third describes the common tricks and ploys used when people argue.

Discussion-flow can be summarized as a series of questions so that students can learn to organize discussion and to evaluate it so that it becomes a tool for further learning. Here is a possible outline:

Discussion-Flow

1. *What is the Issue/Topic?*
   - Can it be stated as a question?
   - Does everyone understand it?
   - Is it clearly stated?
2. *What does the Issue Involve?*
   - Are any definitions of terms necessary?
   - What (if any) are the values involved?
   - What are the facts?
3. *Is There An Agreed Agenda For The Discussion?*
   - What is the purpose of the discussion?
   - What topics will need to be discussed, in what order?
   - Are any time-allotments needed?
   - Above all, is everyone clear what the discussion is supposed to achieve?
4. *Are All Points Of View Considered?*
   - Have all the possible points of view on the issue been identified?
   - Have their strong and weak points been identified?
   - If there is not enough time, which will be discussed and which ignored?
5. *Are The Following Discussion-Activities Carried Out When Necessary?*
   - Periodic summaries provided so that everyone is clear about what has been said.
   - Examples given/asked for to support/contradict arguments.
   - Definitions agreed upon.
   - Sources of authority asked for/given.
   - Factual information asked for/given.
   - Clarification/explanation of points asked for/given.
6. *Does The Discussion Stay On Topic?*
   - Do people listen to and reply to each other rather than going off in their own direction?
   - Are debating tricks identified and challenged?
   - Are red-herrings avoided?
7. *Does The Discussion Come To A Definite End?*
   - Have you arranged to bring the discussion to a definite end rather than having it just evaporate?

Beyond these seven questions, of course, lies the whole field of interpersonal relations, of group interaction, which can have a major impact upon the course of a discussion. Here again is something that should be deliberately taught, so that students are introduced to the roles that people commonly play in a group.

Discussion Group Interaction — Personal Roles
Who played the following roles and how often?
How did they affect the discussion?

1. *Facilitator*
   - Brings discussion back on to topic
   - Summarizes

- Settles personal arguments
- Seeks more information
- Etc.

2. *Initiator*
   - Offers opinions
   - Raises new points
   - Etc.
3. *Encourager*
   - Brings everyone into the discussion
   - Encourages people to speak
   - Discourages personal attacks
   - Etc.
4. *Clown*
   - Shows off
   - Tells pointless stories
   - Interrupts for no reason
   - Etc.
5. *Blocker*
   - Keeps hammering at one point no matter what other people want
   - Holds up the discussion
   - Will not agree to reasonable points
   - Etc.
6. *Focusser*
   - Brings discussion back on to topic
   - Clarifies what people mean
   - Asks tough questions
   - Etc.
7. *Dominator*
   - Will not give others a chance to speak
   - Will not consider other people's opinions
   - Etc.
8. *Non-participant*
   - Says little or nothing (but distinguish between someone (1) who is interested and does not wish to speak and (2) who is simply not interested.)

These eight headings are deliberately simplified and scaled-down for the convenience of students. More elaborate versions are possible. Here, for example, is a full-blown list compiled by two experts in group processes:[44]

1. *Group-Task Roles*
   Initiator
   Contributor
   Information/Opinion Seeker
   Information/Opinion Giver
   Orienter
   Elaborator
   Evaluator/Critic
   Energizer
   Procedural Technician

2. *Group-Building & Maintenance*
   Encourager
   Harmonizer
   Gatekeeper
   Expediter
   Standard-setter
   Group-observer
   Follower
3. *Individual Negative Roles*
   Aggressor
   Blocker
   Recognition-seeker
   Self-confessor
   Playboy
   Dominator
   Individual help-seeker
   Special interest pleader

Finally, students should be taught to recognize and deal with at least the commonest debating tricks by means of which arguments are often won or lost, or sidetracked, and which seem to be more frequent in political discussion than in any other kind. (see pages 37-38)

If this is what should be taught, there still remains the question of how best to teach it. Initially, many of the discussion skills will need to be introduced to students by way of lecture and explanation, despite the apparent paradox of teaching discussion skills by exposition. Fairly quickly, however, students should be required to apply what they have been taught. In the first instance this is probably best done by giving them transcripts of discussion for analysis. Once they have gained some familiarity with the main points, they can work with discussions recorded on audio or videotape. And, of course, together with all this they should be engaged in discussion themselves.

To make discussion an even more powerful tool, and to drive the skills home more firmly, students can also be taught to evaluate their own discussions. Two things are necessary: an evaluation measure and a way to apply it. The measure need not be especially complicated: indeed, the simpler the better, as this example suggests (see page 39):

DEBATING TRICKS TO WATCH FOR IN DISCUSSION

Type	Description	Examples
1. Using emotional language	The use of words which carry certain meanings so that listeners will be influenced either for or against you.	• I'm firm, you're stubborn, she is obstinate, he is pigheaded . . . • That sounds like *communism*, to me . . . • Mr. X *is a fanatical* liberal (i.e. instead of dedicated, enthusiastic, committed, etc.)
2. Appealing to a respected source of authority	Referring to someone or something that almost everyone respects (e.g. the Bible) in order to make your argument seem stronger or someone else's argument seem weaker than it really is	• Well, that isn't what *our teacher* said yesterday . . . • If you don't believe me, check *today's newspaper* . . . • My brother is a *policeman* (professor, millionaire, priest, etc.) and he says . . .
3. Using an *ad hominem* argument	*Ad hominem* is Latin, meaning "against the man." Here you ignore the content of the argument and instead attack the speaker personally.	• Well, how would you know, you've never been there . . . • Everybody knows that you're a *100% socialist* so that your mind is already made up . . • You're not even old enough to vote, so what gives you the right to say that?
4. Referring to personal experience	Using your own personal experience to convince other people that you are the only one who knows what he/she is talking about. After all, you've been there, etc.	• Well, I actually saw a UFO . . . • I've been questioned by the police so I know exactly what they're like • As an immigrant, I can tell you all about prejudice . . .
5. Converting the particular into the general or "some" into "all".	Taking one or a very small number of examples and treating them as though they tell the whole story. Some of the examples in #4 also illustrate this.	• It's well known that teenagers are careless and irresponsible . . . • Did you read about Mr. X taking a bribe? That's just like a politician . . . • I worked for a woman boss once, so I know what they're like . . .
6. The appeal to "common-sense".	Referring to something that you hope everyone will think of as common-sense so that they will give up the argument.	• Well, it's against human nature . . . • History proves that most people don't know what is best for them • It's obvious that free enterprise is more efficient than government-run industry.
7. Stereotyping	Treating one set of people as though they are all the same and can all be described by the same words. This is similar to #5, where people suggest "all" when they mean "some".	• Politicians are only interested in what they can get for themselves . . . • Women simply aren't as good with their brains as men are . . . • People on welfare are lazy . . .

Type	Description	Examples
8. Using one-sided examples	Trying to prove argument right or wrong by using only those examples which help your side and ignoring any others.	• It's easy to see what Russians are like, just look at Stalin . . . • Of course, the British make the best cars; look at the Rolls-Royce . . . • If you want proof that black people are physically superior to whites, just look at American basketball . . .
9. Treating values or opinions as facts.	Taking something which is only a personal opinion and stating it as though it were a fact about which there cannot possibly be any disagreement.	• That's a terrible shirt (= I don't like it) . • What a stupid argument! (= I don't agree) • Politics is for the birds (= I'm not interested)
10. Misusing statistics.	Quoting figures and specific quantities (they always sound very scientific) to prove or disprove an argument, usually by using those figures that help you and ignoring all others. People may even invent statistics to make their argument look more impressive. The main points to watch for are (1) the source of the figures and (2) what is being compared to what.	• Our unemployment is lower than it was five years ago (*BUT* — it may be higher than it was last year). • We are giving hospitals $50 million this year (*BUT* — as a percentage of total funds it may be a smaller amount than previously). • Our cost of living is lower than that in half the provinces (*BUT* — it's also higher than that in the other half.
11. Bluffing.	There is a story of a diplomat whose speeches were notated like a musical score: "weak point: shout here;" "needs emphasizing: raise voice"; etc. Often when people feel that they are losing an argument, they turn to bluff: they pretend to be angry, indignant, hurt, offended, etc., in order to make the opposition feel guilty.	• How dare you say that I don't know what I'm talking about? . . . • I'm older and more experienced than you . . . • I'm really shocked that you don't agree . . .
12. Changing the issue.	Often when people are discussing something they move off the topic without even realizing. However people can also change the topic on purpose in order to avoid areas where their arguments are weak, or to make someone else's argument look false.	• You said that Russia became Communist in 1914, but in fact it was in 1917 . . . (and the argument switches to who is right, or whether dates are important, etc.) • I don't know why you're going on about cancer, the biggest cause of death is road accidents (this may be true but it does ot mean that therefore we should ignore cancer).

Discussion Evaluation

1. Was the issue clearly stated?
2. Was the issue generally understood?
3. Did the discussion stay on the topic?
4. Did the discussion reach a definite conclusion?
5. Were discussion techniques used?
   - periodic summaries
   - use of examples
   - sources of authority
   - classifications
   - definitions
   - separation of fact from opinion.
6. Were debating tricks identified and dealt with?
7. Did people listen to and respond to each other?
8. Did everyone participate?
9. Was anything important missed?
10. Were you satisfied with the discussion?
11. Were you interested in the discussion?
12. How would you rate the discussion?
13. What have you learned from the discussion?
14. What should be done differently?

On this particular measure, questions 1 — 12 could be answered on a sliding scale (say, a five point scale) ranging from excellent (A) to unsatisfactory (F). Questions 13 and 14 are obviously open-ended.

As for using something like this, various means exist. The discussion can be taped, for instance, and then analyzed by the students themselves. They can give an immediate assessment once the discussion is over, or they can keep a running assessment as the discussion goes on. Alternatively, some members of the group can be assigned the task of evaluating the rest of the group as it sets about the discussion. Finally, one can use the fishbowl technique by which one group of students sits around another group, to form two concentric circles, and listens to and analyzes its discussion.

In any event, the general point is clear. Discussion is an important teaching strategy and it is especially appropriate in the teaching of politics for at least three reasons. First, political questions can rarely be satisfactorily resolved by *fiat*, at least not in a democracy. They are precisely matters for investigation and discussion. Second, in everyday life, when people consider politics at all, they usually do so *via* discussion and conversation. Third, there is some evidence that the use of discussion techniques in the classroom can enhance political efficacy, or, to put it more cautiously, can increase the sense of personal competence which in turn bears upon the sense of political efficacy. Finally, if discussion is to be successful and effective, students must be taught how to do it.

Another useful aid to discussion is a technique which has been used widely in moral education — the dilemma. To quote Beyer: "Dilemmas are stories which present a central character in a problematic suggestion for which there are several possible responses and in which a number of moral issues come in conflict."[45] In teaching politics, the issues need not necessarily be moral, though they will often have a moral dimension. One can easily think of many "political" topics in which dilemmas could be useful: should Socrates have seized the opportunity to escape? Should Luther have defied the Pope? Should Charles I of England have been executed? Should Riel have rebelled? Should the Winnipeg labour leaders have

called a general strike in 1919? Should the Trudeau government have invoked the War Measures Act? All such questions raise the issue of the nature of political authority and obedience. To take more contemporary questions, current at the time of writing: should a police-force be allowed to strike? Should parents be allowed to educate their children out of school? Should abortion be made available on demand? Should private property be expropriated?

The important elements of a dilemma are that it must pose a problem to which there is a range of possible solutions and that these solutions must involve conflicting rights or values, for example the right to own and enjoy possession of private property vs. the public good in the case of expropriation. The dilemma should, of course, be made as concrete as possible, describing particular people confronted with a particular problem, be it historical, fictional or hypothetical. Often, it will be useful to present students not only with the dilemma but with a range of alternative solutions or courses of action in order to get discussion started. There are few things more frustrating than to present students with a dilemma only to have them refuse to agree that there is any dilemma at all since in their view it is an open and shut case, or to have them look at the issue in stunned silence. To prevent this, and to get discussion moving in some organized way, it can be useful not only to present students with a range of possible solutions but also to assign these solutions more or less arbitrarily to different groups within the class and to tell them to take a stand on their particular solution in order to present it to the whole class. The point is a simple one: some classes will move into discussion easily; others will need a great deal of prompting and support.

Beyer has proposed a very useful five-step sequence for helping students come to grips with dilemmas.[46]

1. *Confront the dilemma*
   Here the teacher makes sure that students do, in fact, understand what the dilemma is all about and what the various issues are, be they factual, definitional, or whatever.
2. *Explore tentative solutions to the dilemma*
   Here the students, either individually or in small groups, establish the various solutions to the dilemma and, in a preliminary way, begin to identify the problematics of the case. As described above, it can be useful to give students on paper the range of alternative solutions in order to get discussion moving.
3. *Small group discussions*
   Here the students divide themselves into small groups in order to consider the issues in the dilemma in a more concentrated way. The groups can either range far and wide or they can be limited to one particular solution, as suggested above. In either case, the task for the small groups is to take a position and to report back to the whole class.
4. *Full class discussion*
   Here the whole class listens to and considers each group's report and weighs the pros and cons of all the solutions to the dilemma that emerge.
5. *Closing the discussion*
   Finally, all the ends are tied together. There is no need here to work for any kind of consensus in the class, or for students to have to make a public declaration of their final stand. Nor, clearly, is it sensible, having used a dilemma format, to work towards or even to imply that there is somewhere

the one definitive answer (although this does not imply that all answers will be equally good). Rather, the point is to bring the whole activity to some kind of recognizable conclusion rather than letting it, like an old soldier, simply fade away.

As an example of what this might mean consider the following description of Sir Robert Borden's problems in confronting the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. It is obviously a very simplified (although I would argue not a false) account. It ignores a whole range of considerations: the mind-set of Meighen, Robertson, *et al.;* the political climate of 1919; the constitutional problems involved in any situation where three levels of government — municipal, provincial, federal — overlap. It is, however, all too easy to overload a dilemma with excess information to the point that students never see the forest for all the trees. Simplification is crucial. It is through simplification, as the Borden dilemma attempts to show, that students can be introduced to one or the other aspect of a complex political topic: in this case, decision-making. In a sense it is an attempt to illustrate the old adage that to any political problem, there are only two practical solutions, of which one is bad while the other is worse.

PRIME MINISTER BORDEN AND THE WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE

Prime Minister Borden faced a serious problem. In fact, he faced many problems, and all of them needed to be solved quickly. He had arrived back in Ottawa on 26 May, eleven days after the Winnipeg General Strike had begun. Before that he had been in Paris, taking part in the peace talks that followed the World War.

But now there was this affair at Winnipeg where it seemed that the strikers had taken over the city. The main Winnipeg paper said that the strike was the work of foreign immigrants. A committee of important Winnipeg businessmen wanted him to arrest the strike leaders immediately. Some of his advisers said that Winnipeg was part of a conspiracy to overthrow the government and that Russian Communists were behind it. And it was certainly true that at the Paris peace talks the world leaders had been worried about the spread of communism.

On the other hand, General Ketchen, a respected army man who knew Winnipeg well, said that all the talk about revolution was exaggerated and that the strikers were mostly interested in lower prices and higher wages. But the strike leaders were talking like Communists and they had praised Communist Russia.

If it was a revolution it was obviously more than just a Winnipeg problem. The Lieutenant-Governor of B.C. had already asked for a British warship to patrol the west coast to help stop radicals from taking over. And unions in other cities were talking about copying Winnipeg: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Prince Alberta, Regina, Toronto and Sydney had already been affected. If the railway workers joined the strike the country could be paralyzed. And if the strikers' ideas were picked up by the soldiers and police, the government would be helpless.

Meanwhile, questions were being asked in parliament and it was important not to look foolish there. The government had to show that it was in control of things. A lot of people were looking to him for leadership. But it was difficult to know what to do when he had to rely on other people for information and when they so often disagreed with each other.

Even so, as he had said in parliament, two things were basic: law and order must be maintained; strikers could not be allowed to take over a whole city. And, second, essential services like police, firemen, mail, railways, and so on, must be kept going. People who worked in essential services must not be allowed to join the strike.

The problem was: what to do for the best? To do nothing was dangerous; but to do too much was just as dangerous. If he went too far, the strikers and their supporters might get really desperate.

This description of Borden and his problem should be presented to the students so that they can explore the pros and cons of the possible solutions. Most probably the students will need some help in getting started and here Beyer's five steps are useful. First, one ensures that the students understand the passage and the task, *viz.* what should Borden do? Second, they are to identify the range of possible solutions open to Borden. Here some kind of brainstorming method will probably work best, with everything the students suggest being written on the board where the most improbable or unrealistic suggestions can sooner or later be eliminated. Third, small group discussions should be organized in which each group is assigned to explore one of the solutions that has survived the brainstorming stage. Fourth, the groups will reassemble and report back to the whole class to have their arguments further tested. Fifth, the episode can be pulled together not in the sense that a vote will be taken to find the "best" solution, or that the teacher will issue some sort of evaluation, but that the factors that have to be taken into account when political decisions are reached will be elaborated. Perhaps, Borden's actual decision and the reasoning behind it could be explained.

It is entirely possible that students will need more help than even Beyer's model provides. One way of dealing with this is to give them a range of alternative solutions with however much explanation is necessary and then, more or less arbitrarily, assign each solution to a group of students for consideration and evaluation. Specifically, they would explore so far as they were able the pros and cons of their assigned course of action and make some report on its feasibility, or otherwise. In the case of the Borden example, for instance, groups of students could be assigned these "solutions":

PRIME MINISTER BORDEN'S POSSIBILITIES

1. To do nothing and hope that things will settle down.
2. To do nothing for the time being but to concentrate on getting more reliable information on just what was going on.
3. To send some high government officials to Winnipeg to negotiate with the strikers.
4. To go personally to Winnipeg and try to settle things on the spot.
5. To send large numbers of police and soldiers to Winnipeg in order to show that the government was going to be tough and to make the strikers stop and think about what could happen.
6. To warn the strike leaders privately that the government would take very strong action if they did not call everything off.
7. To ask the strike leaders and their opponents to come to Ottawa for a conference in order to try to settle things.
8. To declare a state of emergency (e.g. under the War Measures Act) and put Winnipeg under army control.
9. To arrest the leaders of the strike without warning and get them out of Winnipeg.

This example is clearly best suited for secondary school students, but the same technique has proved to be practicable in elementary grades too. Lawrence Kohlberg uses a dilemma which deals with the plight of a little girl who promised her parents not to climb any more trees after causing a minor crisis by getting herself stuck in a tree. However, one day she is asked by a friend to climb a tree to rescue the friend's kitten. What should she do: keep her promise to her parents or rescue the kitten? Similar dilemmas can be phrased in terms of cheating, betraying friends, stealing, and so on. The dilemma structure remains the same, but the contents and the level of sophistication change according to the students being taught.

The approach can be varied slightly so that the students are not being asked to put forward a personal solution but rather to construct an imaginary conversation or to enact a scene. In turn, this can become the basis for discussion. Here, the student activity serves as an entry point to dramatize and to make more intelligible the issues to be discussed. Here, for example, are two examples using the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919:[47]

Situation 1: Alice Johnson is fed up and worried. She and her husband Fred have three children, but Fred has never made much money. The family emigrated from England to make a fresh start in Canada, but the move has not changed anything. Things improved for them during the war, however. In 1917 Fred got a job with the Post Office and since then has been earning regular wages. But — typical of the Johnson luck — he is on strike. Alice has a family to feed and no money coming in. She considers it one thing for a single man to go on strike, but a married man should think of his family. It is all very well for Fred to say that the workers should stick together, but that doesn't put food on the table.

The government has given the post office workers until May 26 to report back to work or be fired permanently. Fred has a chance to keep his job. This afternoon the children are out of the way, and Alice decides that she and Fred should discuss the strike and his plans . . .

Situation 2: It is May, 1919. Bob Smith is angry. The working man, he thinks, has never had a fair deal. As far as he can see, workers are being cheated out of a fair wage so that their bosses can make a big profit. The war, he thinks, proved this. Sure, wages went up, but not nearly as much as prices. Some people made themselves very rich during the war. The government had the nerve to bring in military conscription, forcing men to go and fight. Bob Smith completely supported the unions: conscription of men was fair only if the government also seized the wealth of the bosses. If men like him could be forced to risk getting killed, it was only fair that the rich should have been forced to pay more taxes. Organization, he is sure, is the answer for the future. The only way to fight the bosses is to have a strong union. In his opinion, in fact, as long as there are different unions, the bosses will always be able to divide and rule. The best answer is Russell's One Big Union. A general strike would be the only way to show that all the workers were standing together to get a fair deal for the labouring class.

It was all very well for some people to scream about communism and revolution. They were bound to squeal. They were the very ones who had

done so well out of the present system. No matter what, Bob Smith was going to support the strike to the very end. A general strike might close down the city, but this was the only way to get justice.

Bob's brother-in-law, Jim Nelson, owns a small store and employs a clerk, a delivery man and a lad to do general chores in the store and stable. Jim fears that his business will not survive a strike, if his employees join. Bob and Jim get into conversation during a family visit . . .

The use of dilemmas not only to stimulate discussion and thought, but also to make the abstractions of politics more real and concrete to youngsters, is similar in some ways to the case-study method, which has become popular in many of the recent approaches to political education. Here, one focusses on an incident or an issue, or illustrates an issue by describing incident(s), whether historical or contemporary, in order to make a point or raise a question. Whereas, however, the central concern of a dilemma is to raise questions of conflicting rights, a case-study deals much more with description and explanation in order primarily to show the reader how something happened. A case-study, so far as the school classroom is concerned, is much like a story. It is an attempt to reduce a large topic to manageable proportions. It is, therefore, important that it be simplified enough for students to understand it, and yet that it contain enough information for them to appreciate the complexities involved. It must focus upon a specific issue (a good part of the secret of writing case studies is knowing what to leave out) but at the same time raise general concerns. Above all, however, it seeks to embed these general concerns in a set of concrete particulars.

A different method is to take a contemporary problem, as yet unresolved, and explore the possibilities open to the actors involved in it. This involves using projective questions: what would you do? What do you think X or Y should do? A contemporary (at the time of writing) problem which begs for this treatment is the argument between Alberta and Ontario over the price of oil and gas. There is abundant material in newspapers, magazines, parliamentary debates, news releases, and so on. It is of some interest to adolescents, involving as it does the price of gasoline and, less obviously perhaps, the availability of jobs. It raises some fundamental questions about federalism: for example, the division between federal and provincial powers; the obligations of a provincial government to its own voters and to the rest of the country; the pros and cons of the present federal system; the relationship between government and private business. It also raises some important questions about decision-making. And, finally, there is a good cast of characters: Clark, Davis, Trudeau, Lougheed, and others.

Finally, having considered the teaching of discussion skills, the use of dilemmas and case-studies, anyone interested in discussion should read Hodgett's description of what he calls the "dialogue" method in *What Culture? What Heritage?*[48] He describes this as containing five parts:

1. *Students were well-prepared.*
   - Reading assignments were carefully selected.
   - A range of opinions/explanations was included.
   - There was no initial review or any lecturing by the teacher.
   - The entire lesson revolved around the discussion of ideas/viewpoints.
2. *Students were skilled in discussion techniques.*
   - Students did most of the talking.
   - Students respected others' viewpoints.
   - Students observed general rules of order.

3. *The teacher had an active role.*
   - Lessons were not totally student-centered nor were they teacher-dominated (teachers were "neither greyed-out neutrals nor domineering masters").
   - Teachers were interested in and knowledgeable about the topic under discussion.
   - Teachers intervened whenever necessary but usually for three reasons: to bring the class back on topic; to correct errors; to offer their own ideas.
4. *Classes were studying a topic in depth.*
   - Topics were usually organized as problems to be investigated.
   - No attempt was made simply to cover ground or meet pre-set deadlines.
5. *Intellectual skills were encouraged.*
   - Students were thinking, weighing evidence, and so on.

What makes Hodgetts' account especially interesting is his comment that the method was successful with *all* kinds of students: ". . . the natural ability of the students is not necessarily a determining factor in successfully using the dialogue or inquiry technique." In other words, there is no truth to the common observation that only the "good" students can really sustain a useful discussion.

CHAPTER 6

SIMULATION, ROLE-PLAYING, DRAMA

Perhaps the main attraction of this cluster of teaching strategies is their ability to make learning experiential, thereby providing for student involvement and possibly increasing students' sense of efficacy. Their pedagogical advantages are easily described. First, they give students much more responsibility for their own learning. Second, they arouse involvement and participation often in a personal way and so bring about a sense of commitment to what is happening in the classroom. Third, they are able to make abstract issues more concrete and hence more comprehensible by providing for personal experience of the issues or topics under study. Fourth, they can often break the ice in the formal atmosphere of a classroom both by bringing students together in a non-threatening setting and by altering the quality of teacher-student relationships. Fifth, they allow different students to do well. Those students who excel with more formal teaching are not necessarily the ones who will stand out in a simulation-game. In short, simulation, role-playing and drama have considerable potential for changing the rules of the hidden curriculum.

There is now abundant literature on simulation and it is not necessary to describe the many and various games that are now available. Commercially produced games, however, suffer from two disadvantages: first, they are often very expensive and, second, they do not fit exactly the requirements of any one particular teacher, having necessarily been designed for a general audience.

There are, therefore, considerable advantages to be gained from designing one's own games. This can be a time-consuming business which can severely test the patience of all but the diehard enthusiasts. Fortunately, it is seldom necessary to start from scratch. Enthusiasts these days talk about 'frame games' — the technical term for adapting existing games to one's own particular needs. One takes the 'frame' of an existing game but replaces its contents with one's own design. Provided one avoids plagiarism, it makes sense to adapt existing games to one's own purposes by redesigning them. Often, indeed, one can get a really useful result by combining approaches and elements from a variety of games. The general rules of game design are not difficult to grasp (applying them takes long practice, however). Essentially, they serve to ensure that one does not neglect any of the major features of a simulation-game, notably its

structure: scenario, roles, player interactions;
equipment: playing pieces, props, role-cards, physical requirements;

procedures: rules for the organizer of the game, rules for the players, criteria for winning;

follow-up: procedures for fostering post-game analysis and discussion.[49]

Designing a simulation-game requires that one work through a series of steps, which, for convenience, can be grouped under three headings: initial decisions; design; and evaluation.

I. Initial Decisions

1. *Objectives:*

The first questions to be asked here are what is to be simulated and why? Some topics, for example, lend themselves to simulation much better than others. There is little or no point in trying to create a simulation that would teach students the institutional structure of Canadian government. This is better done in more routine ways. However, the achievement of Confederation is much more easily simulated. If Confederation is chosen, then further decisions must be made: for example, is it best to simulate one of the conferences held at Charlottetown, Quebec and London, or to design a game in which they are in some way treated as one? In other words, in any historically-based simulation, the question arises as to just how accurate the simulation is to be. Obviously, simulation is a simplification of an event, but the problem that faces a game designer is to decide at what point simplification becomes falsification. To return to the Confederation example, intertwined with the example of what to simulate (one or all three conferences? The debates in one of the legislative assemblies? A public meeting, real or fictitious? An election campaign as in New Brunswick?) is the question of *why*? In other words, what is the simulation intended to teach? It could be aimed at showing students the divisions of opinion in British North America in the 1860's. It could be designed to describe the problems facing the British North American colonies. It could be intended to show how and why the decisions were made and hence to illustrate the wider concept of political decision-making generally.

2. *Organizational Factors:*

Less complex but equally important is the task of establishing the actual circumstances in which the game will be played. How many students are in the class? What kind of people are they? How rigid is the timetable? What physical space is available? How will these and similar questions influence the design of the game? The game dealing with political decision-making in Canada, *Caucus,* is an excellent example of how to cope with such practical concerns. For example it can be played with as few as sixteen and as many as forty-odd players, so that it can be used in most classes. It can be played in forty-five minute segments or over a period of hours so that it can accommodate any timetable. It can be played in one room or in several. In its latest version, it can be played at a beginners' or a more advanced level.

3. *The Type of Game*

The questions to be answered here include the following: is it to be a game where some win and others lose or is it to be a co-operative game where there are no winners or losers in the conventional sense? Is it rather to be a role-playing game in which people assume certain roles and proceed to reach certain decisions, for example, whether or not to adopt free trade with the United States, or whether or not to boycott the Moscow Olympic Games. Alternatively, and perhaps especially with younger children, one might opt

not so much for simulation as for a board-game. It is possible for instance, to adapt a game like *Snakes and Ladders* so that it teaches a great deal of political information.

II. Design

1. *The Scenario:*
   At some point early in the design process, the designer has to write a description of what is being simulated such that players will be able to understand the context in which they are operating. In the Confederation case, for example, the scenario will describe what was happening in British North America in the 1860's. It will describe the different colonies and their political structure. It will say something about the historical background. It will explain the factors that were making Confederation an issue and the division of opinion about it. The central question is what to include and what to omit in a scenario. Too much information can overload the players, especially younger players. It can also point them in particular directions so that the element of freedom is removed from the game. It is one thing to put a student in the role of, say, John A. Macdonald so that he or she can decide what to do. It is quite another to give the student so much information that all he or she does is to recreate Macdonald's every move. On the other hand, too little information will obviously leave players directionless. In addition, and certainly in the early stages of design, the scenario must be kept flexible. The general rule is that the scenario must fit the game, not the game the scenario.

2. *Roles*
   Obviously, the players in a simulation-game are acting out roles, be they specific people (Macdonald), official positions (Prime Minister), or more general characters (a militant trade unionist). The tasks are to include enough roles for a whole class and to describe them sufficiently fully to give the players enough direction without at the same time cramping their freedom of action. In dealing with school students, it is especially important to give them enough information not only about their "character's" background, but also about any appropriate opinions, attitudes and feelings. Students commonly fall back upon their personal beliefs when acting a role, especially if they find themselves in a position for which they have not been adequately briefed.

3. *Players' Goals*
   The game has to be clear about what players are intended to accomplish. Is it to win re-election? To reach a decision on some issue? To write a new constitution? Beyond this, is there to be any particular measure of success? For example, do players win points? This is to raise again the question of the degree of competition in the game. Some games are to be won, whether by an individual being the first to reach a certain goal or by a group winning an election, for example, and some games are organized rather to complete a task, such as negotiating a treaty. Whatever a game designer does, however, there must be something at which the players are to aim.

4. *Interactions*
   This is the question of who does what to whom (or with whom) in the game. The game can feature negotiations among governments, for example, with each government team consisting of certain officials. Or it might feature political parties or interest groups such as labour and management. Often the players will thus work in some kind of grouping. In addition, it must be

possible for groups to come together for negotiation or discussion. With school students, all this needs a certain degree of organization. To allow a class of, say, thirty students to run a game for an hour or more will probably mean that only a few students, more vocal than the rest, will really participate. Also, to go on with the same activity for too long a period of time can destroy the very interest that a game is intended to produce. Many successful games thus divide play into a series of rounds in which the players first meet in small groups, to establish a group position and then meet in general session. To use *Caucus* as an example, the players are all members of the same political party. They meet in regional groupings to decide their stand on a range of issues; then they move into a "free-for-all" session in which they can sound others' opinions, make alliances and so on; then they convene in full assembly for formal discussion. This done, the process begins over again. The crucial point is that the players will need to have the action broken into manageable chunks.

5. *External Factors*

Anyone familiar with board games knows about chance cards. One can be moving happily around the board until landing on a chance square which leads to the taking of a card from the chance pile. It can be good news (move ahead five spaces) or bad (miss two turns). In the same way, some simulation games include external, chance factors. It may be a telegram to one group within the game giving them information that no one else has and thus giving them a competitive edge. The game, *Trade Off At Yalta,* for example, includes secret information for President Truman and the U.S. delegation on the progress of the atomic bomb. Alternatively, one member of a group can be designated to leak secret information to another. Another type of external factor can be designed as a newsrelease intended to influence all players' decisions: a revolution, civil war, financial crisis, cabinet revolt and so forth.

6. *Materials*

Sooner or later materials will have to be designed and produced. For classroom use, the obvious rule is: the simpler the better. The more bits and pieces, the greater the chance of their being lost. The more complicated they are, the more difficult they will be to use. At a minimum, players will need some kind of handbook describing the game; some statement of their role, usually on a separate card; and some mark or badge of identification to tell others who they are. Experience suggests that materials work best when they are colourful and visually appealing. It is useful, also, if they convey the mood of the game. To take two actual examples, "adviser's briefcase" or "party member's handbook" are better than "player's rules". The intent is, after all, for players to forget that they are playing a game and, instead, to treat it as the real thing.

7. *Rules*

By this point, the designer should have built up a fairly clear picture of what rules are needed. Little needs to be said about this, except to state the obvious: the fewer and simpler the rules, the better. The enjoyment and usefulness of any game will be spoiled if the rules are too difficult to follow.

III. Evaluation

1. *Testing*

The only way to test a game is to try it out. Along the way, the various components can also be tested. Once a scenario has been written, students should read it to see if they can understand it. Similarly, with role-descriptions

or lists of rules. Eventually, however, the whole game will have to be tried and, in almost all cases, reworked to some extent. In a sense, game design is never totally finished: there are always different adaptations to try.

2. *Follow-up*
Since the game is intended to serve an educational purpose it must have provision for follow-up with the students who played it. They must have the chance to discuss and analyze what they learned from the game. Rather than leave this to chance, it may be that the game should include some kind of post-game questionnaire which will help players organize their thoughts and put them down on paper. In any event, the follow-up should be a planned activity, not something left to chance. In the words of one expert: "the inquest is as important as the game: in fact, *most* of what's learned is learned at the inquest."[30]

Related to simulation are role-playing and other dramatic devices. All help to bring the world of politics into a closer fit with the world of the child. Role-playing and drama have the added advantage of costing little or nothing and being easy to stage. It should perhaps be noted here that we are not talking of drama as an orchestrated production such as a school play or a model parliament. Rather, the emphasis is on the use of drama in an everyday classroom setting.

It can be extremely valuable, for instance, for youngsters to be 'confronted' with a political figure, past or present, and have to argue with him or her face-to-face. For example, a class might be studying Louis Riel and offering various opinions on his motives, sanity and general personality. But everything becomes much sharper if the teacher suddenly adopts the role of Louis Riel and forces the students to argue with him, challenging them and rebutting them. Similarly, rather than talk about R. B. Russell and the Winnipeg General Strike, or Henry VIII and Tudor monarchy, bring the characters into the classroom and let them speak and be questioned.

This can be done in at least two ways. First, the teacher can simply strike while the iron is hot. When the moment seems right, for example if all the students are in agreement that trade unions are too powerful, then the teacher assumes the role of a committed unionist and provokes the students into arguing. At first sight, this simply seems an unnecessary embroidering of what teachers do anyway when they get students to defend their opinions. The advantage, however, is that it often removes the tension that can pervade even good student-teacher relationships. A sensitive teacher will be reluctant to push a student too far; many students similarly will be unwilling to get into a no-holds-barred argument with their teacher. When the teacher becomes "someone else," this problem is reduced, or even eliminated. And experience suggests that no problems are caused if, for some reason, one has to step out of role. For example, one may be pretending to be Louis Riel but it becomes obvious that the students are missing something. Often, they will address an 1885 problem in the light of twentieth century knowledge — knowledge which Riel could not possibly have had. In such cases, one has to step out of role, saying something like "Look, wait a minute, there's a point you're missing . . .", and then move back into role.

A second approach to this kind of role-playing is more formal than simply seizing an appropriate moment. It involves preparing the class for a visit by some historical or political personage. Perhaps William Lyon Mackenzie or Louis Joseph Papineau will visit the class next Wednesday. The teacher can then do whatever publicity-work is necessary: announcements, even posters. The students can be assigned the task of preparing questions to ask the visitor. This will ensure

that, at least, they will have something to talk about and, if necessary, provide for screening out irrelevant questions beforehand.

If this more formal approach is taken, whether the visitor is played by the teacher or by someone else (perhaps someone else on staff, or someone from the community), certain rules apply. A minimum of costume will suffice, although full regalia can obviously be helpful in creating atmosphere. It can, however, distract students' attention from the real point at hand. For Henry VIII, for instance, an academic gown will suffice; for Riel or R. B. Russell, nothing at all. What is necessary is that students are prepared to engage in the 'willing suspension of disbelief' — something that they do all the time anyway when they watch television or read a novel. There are certain necessary steps that a teacher must take. For instance, students must indicate (at least by nodding) that they are willing to go along. They must respond to a direct question, accompanied by whatever explanation is necessary, asking whether they can accept that this is "really" the character it is alleged to be. Without this commitment, the technique should not be used.

Again, in setting the stage it is necessary to make visual contact with everyone in the room. Henry VIII, for instance, having looked at everyone in the room, would demand that everyone should stand "in our royal presence" — and, so far, everyone has. One must always remember that the aim in bringing a character into the classroom in this way is not to impart factual knowledge — there are better ways of doing that — but to give students some personal experience of what would otherwise be only a textbook topic. Thus, one does not need to know every fact, every item of information: one is seeking to create an impression, to provide an experience, and this (as in real life) may mean shouting, blustering, weaseling out, refusing to answer ('no comment'), and even downright lying. As with simulation-games, dramatic techniques should be followed by an 'inquest' in which such tactics are examined and analyzed.

Another, and perhaps better-known, form of role-play is for students themselves to assume characters and portray some episode (e.g. the Charlottetown Conference or the Confederation debates) either *via* a script they have prepared or *via* improvisation. This, of course, is the approach underlying model parliaments, mock elections and so on.

All these techniques do more than base learning upon personal experience. At their best, they also enhance students' feelings of competence and efficacy. In particular, they serve "to literally bring out what children already know but don't yet know they know," to quote Dorothy Heathcote, the most powerful practitioner of dramatic techniques in education today.

> Far too often teachers of older students irrelevantly paste extrapolations of experience on to the outside of their students. The students could discover these extrapolations for themselves, making them their own, if only they were allowed ample time to spin out their own elaboration. . . . The technique of elaborating probably contributes more than anything else to the process of the student's becoming a mature person.[31]

CHAPTER 7
THE MEDIA

It is next to impossible to teach politics without using the media. In the first place, the media and politics are increasingly interconnected and often the media themselves become a political issue. In the second place, no textbook can deal adequately with current political issues. Textbooks are condemned to perpetual obsolescence. Once written, they are always overtaken by events. At the same time, the media must be treated carefully, and analyzed rather than simply consumed. It is crucial, given the increasingly important political role of the media, that students be taught to approach them critically.

The phrase is important. There is no point in teaching students (even if one could) automatically to disbelieve the media. To repeat an earlier point: scepticism is not cynicism. Freedom of and access to information is fundamental to any system of democratic politics and, obviously, the media have a key role in ensuring that such freedom and access exist. Given the tendency of some groups in Canada to favour censorship, be it for political, moral or other reasons, it is especially important that students become committed to the crucial value of a free press (using the word to include the electronic media). At the same time, it cannot always be assumed that the media will, in fact, give us all the news. It may well be that certain viewpoints are not fairly represented in the media or that certain issues are not adequately covered. The media are not simply neutral channels of information. They do not simply present the news; rather, they define what is or is not news. Thus, two things are important: one, that students learn to cherish a free press, and, two, that they become active and critical users of it. Ironically, despite the importance of the media in contemporary life, students in many parts of Canada can pass right through the school system without ever studying them. Neil Postman in the United States has coined the term "media ecology". We could do with it, or something like it, in Canada.

This is especially true in the teaching of politics for today, more than ever, the media and politics are inseparable. There is obviously something to Marshall McLuhan's point that the electronic media have made necessary a new style of political leadership. Election campaigns are fought out more on the airwaves than on the hustings. Political parties make intensive use of the media to deliver their message: hence the paid political advertisement; hence the press-conference; hence the use of public relations experts. In addition to all this, the demands of the media have influenced the conduct of politics. Many observers have pointed out, for

example, that television depends upon "good" visual material; it has to dramatize and personalize. It has to tell a story — often within the space of two or three minutes or less. Thus, complicated issues are often reduced to a question of "good guys" and "bad guys". Thus, the increasingly presidential nature of politics, even in Canada, with ever-growing attention being paid to the personalities and plans of the leaders. It remains an open question to what extent Joe Clark's media image was responsible for his losing the 1980 federal election, although it is worth noting that Geoffrey Stevens, of the *Globe and Mail,* commented that "television is the chief villain . . . a terrible vehicle for revealing how a politician . . . . thinks and what he really believes." The future will certainly bring fundamental changes. Technological developments may well make it possible, for example, for people to vote on issues by pushing a button in their homes, thus ushering in the age of truly plebiscitary democracy.

The Canadian media, and specifically the electronic media, have a political role in another, less partisan, sense. According to the terms of the Broadcasting Act of 1968, the national broadcasting system, which is defined as including both private and public stations, "should be effectively owned and controlled by Canadians so as to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada". In addition, it should "contribute to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of the Canadian identity". While they may lack precision, these phrases clearly indicate that the electronic media are obliged by statute to enhance some kind of Canadianism. In short, they have a political role.

For all these reasons, it is extremely difficult to conceive of a satisfactory approach to teaching politics which does not use the media. Since this particular discussion deals with teaching politics *via* the media, rather than teaching about the media in their own right, it will necessarily seem incomplete to anyone interested in the latter. However, politics must remain the primary concern. In this regard, there are four overlapping ways of using the media:

1. to use the media simply as a source of information, to complement textbooks;
2. to accustom students to using the media for themselves so that they might become better informed throughout life;
3. to teach students not just to get information from the media but to use them critically;
4. to teach directly about the role and influence of the media in the political arena.

Of these four possibilities, all except the last are practicable at all levels of the school system, albeit with varying levels of sophistication. Children in the elementary grades, for example, can learn and apply some techniques for critically evaluating information. After all, they quickly learn to be sceptical of television commercials. In any event, there is sufficient evidence that even young children can, in various ways, cope with the first three approaches listed above. The fourth, however, is a different proposition. To teach students about the political role of the media assumes that they know something about both politics and the media, and that they are able to put this knowledge together in some useful way. It may be best, therefore, to deal with this topic somewhere in the secondary grades.

The first approach, using the media simply as a source of information, needs little explanation. It involves little more than a teacher clipping relevant items out of newspapers and magazines (or, where copyright permits, taping from radio or television). A bit more ambitious is the task of building up clippings files for classroom use. A good collection of such files provides a first-rate resource for both

teachers and students. If teachers are to cater more to individual differences, and if students are to work more on their own, then they need appropriate materials. These can be provided easily and cheaply through a collection of newspapers and magazine clippings arranged under suitable headings. Indeed, newspapers and magazines are especially useful for students who have difficulty reading the regular textbook.

Surprisingly, however, although school librarians usually maintain such files, individual classroom teachers rarely do, although it is in the classroom that the files would be of most use. To have them immediately accessible, without students having to make a special trip to the library, would obviously increase their use. And, of course, in many small schools there is no school library for students to use anyway. Admittedly, this means more work for the classroom teacher, but much of this can be delegated to students. In the same way that students serve as board-monitors, office-messengers, and the rest, so they could work to maintain the clippings files up to date.

All this, in turn, points to another conclusion: teachers of politics must themselves use the media. It is not too much to ask, for example, that someone who claims to teach politics should read more than one newspaper. It is disappointing that so few schools subscribe to any newspaper other than their own local one. It would be money well spent for any school to make available through its library, or through its social studies area, four or five newspapers from around the country (and, where possible, from outside the country), chosen to represent at least the major regions of Canada. For example, a newspaper from the Atlantic Provinces, from Quebec (in French if at all possible), from Ontario, and from Western Canada would provide an invaluable resource for anyone teaching politics. A daily subscription might be too ambitious but there is no reason why, say, the Saturday editions should not be obtained.

One of the peculiarities of Canada is that, with the possible exception of the *Globe and Mail*, it has no national newspaper. Rather, despite the influence of a few nationally syndicated columnists, its newspapers reflect regional priorities and concerns, as does commercial radio. Since many national political problems revolve around conflicting regional interests, they can be best understood through a series of regional viewpoints, as represented, for example, in newspapers. Further, it is often in the local press that one finds particularly strong expressions of a particular regional point of view. From a teacher's viewpoint, therefore, access to newspapers from different regions of Canada can be a goldmine. Here one can find the differing interpretations, the contrasting viewpoints, that provide such rich material for teaching. Take, for example, this selection from the Victoria *Daily Colonist* (23 August, 1979). It is part of a letter written to the newspaper by the Honourable Jack Davis, MLA for North Vancouver-Seymour, and a former federal cabinet minister:

> No Go Ontario! Your manufacturing industries already prosper at our expense. There is no reason why we in Western Canada should also fatten your provincial coffers where oil and gas are concerned.

As the letter begins, so it continues, developing the argument that the Western provinces are entitled to their place in the sun, until it ends with this peroration:

> No Ontario, you have been a sheltered province for years. We in the West are already helping you to adjust to higher energy costs. But don't ask Ottawa to cut into the revenues of our three Western provinces in order to make your provincial government look good in the eyes of the people of Ontario. We can all be hurt that way!

It might be noted in passing that the writer speaks of the three western provinces (poor Manitoba, left out again!), but the point is not that this is necessarily a typical Western Canadian viewpoint, but that its bluntness makes it ideal teaching material. Juxtaposed with, say, an equally forthright Eastern Canadian statement and, of course, some more balanced material, it could provide the basis for a very useful teaching episode. Unless teachers have access to a range of newspapers, however, they will miss such material, and, to this extent, their teaching will be unnecessarily limited.

All this concerns newspapers and magazines, but by and large it applies to the non-print media also, although, of course, they do not contain such a large amount of politically relevant material. And, for obvious reasons, it is generally impossible to build up a collection of regional radio viewpoints in the way that one can with newspapers. The paradox is that the print media, because they exist in tangible form and are easily duplicated, can be easily used in the classroom, but students mostly use radio and television, whose products are much more ephemeral. To some extent, however, this can be countered by the use of audio- and videotapes, provided always that copyright laws are respected.

The second approach to using the media is a little more ambitious than all of this in that, rather than the teacher providing all the material, the intent is to get students to use the media for themselves. There is, at this point, no major concern to train students to look critically at the media. That will come later. Here the priority is simply to interest students in the possibilities the media provide and to get them into the habit of reading the newspaper or listening to the news.

In this connection, wall or bulletin board displays can be useful. Collections of clippings under various headings (local, national, international, for instance, or energy, labour, health and services, transportation, and so on) may not be the most visually exciting items in the world, but they are a good deal better than bare walls — unless they are allowed to go yellow and stale with age. Further, students can themselves be given the responsibility of maintaining and changing the displays. It may just be that the constant appearance of newspaper articles, and their frequent change, will persuade at least some students that there is more in the paper than the comics, the sports news and the classified advertisements.

The most widely used techniques for getting students to use the media seem to be the current affairs lesson and the scrapbook. The first usually takes the form of students bringing newspaper articles to school on an assigned day, giving a short explanation of them, and answering any questions posed by other students and the teacher. In the second approach, students usually compile a scrapbook or a folder of items from the newspaper on a particular topic or theme, perhaps the economy, or federal-provincial relations, or perhaps a collection of cartoons, and so on. The items gradually have to be accompanied by a paragraph or so of explanation in the students' own words.

Both approaches have some potential, but as generally used they display serious shortcomings. Indeed, they can easily become a waste of everyone's time. Their main weakness is that they lack any component which will lead to serious thought about the issues to which they are intended to draw attention. Students simply collect and annotate, often in a very perfunctory way. They hurriedly scan the previous night's paper to find something suitable, read it on their way to school and then trust to luck. The remedy is simple and straightforward: to provide more structure and organization. Rather than a current affairs lesson, for example, in which a dozen or so students hurriedly present their articles on a mish-mash of themes, one needs some common theme, about which students have been taught something, and some common framework of questions.

Best of all, perhaps, is to elaborate on these approaches so that students have to give some thought not only to the subject-matter of their article(s), but also to the manner of treatment and presentation. It is one thing, for example, to reflect upon a series of newspaper articles or a television programme on, say, civil liberties: it is another to think also about how the particular medium handled the information. One deals not only with the message but with the way it is conveyed.

A development of the scrapbook format can be useful here. In this, students take a topic, either of their own or their teacher's choosing, and follow it over a designated period of time, say three or four weeks. They compile a scrapbook of dated, annotated clippings, but they are also required to examine how media coverage of their topic changed during the designated time period. Initially, of course, students will need a fair amount of help and advice to organize this, but it is fairly easily learned. Perhaps the best way of giving them the kind of structure they will need is by way of an outline such as this:

ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA

1. What is the issue/topic you have chosen to study?
2. What are the beginning and ending dates of your study?
3. (a) List the most important facts about the issue/topic.
   (b) Why is it seen as important enough to get attention in the media?
   (c) What are the main points of view on the issue/topic and who holds them? (e.g. governments, political parties, church groups, business groups, unions, important individuals, etc.).
4. How much time or space has been given to the issue/topic over the period you have been studying it? (With radio/tv estimate time in minutes and describe the type of programmes: news, current affairs, documentary, specials, interviews, etc. With newspapers, measure space in column inches).
5. How much importance have the media given to the issue/topic? (e.g., headlines or top of the news stories; editorials; cartoons; pictures; which pages of the paper; etc.).
6. Did this importance change over the period of your study? If so, explain how and why.
7. How much of the media coverage was fact and how much was opinion or interpretation? Explain.
8. What were the sources of the media's information (e.g., wire-services; interviews; eye-witness or participant accounts; "usually reliable sources"; etc.).
9. How credible (believable) was what the media told you? Explain.
10. Do you think the media covered the issue/topic fairly? Give examples.
11. Don't forget to attach the *dated* and identified clippings or tapes with this report.

This also, of course, assumes that students have been or will be taught certain things, for example how to distinguish between fact and opinion, or how to assess the credibility of evidence.

It is important, especially when the subject is politics, that students learn how the media can, consciously or otherwise, influence one's understanding of the news. Consider, for example, these two articles, both of which dealt with the same story. To appreciate what is involved, it is useful to know that at the time Ed Schreyer had only recently ceased to be premier of Manitoba and that there was considerable speculation in the province that he would not stay long in provincial politics.

STABBACK SOLE CONTENDER FOR NEB TOP JOB TO DATE
***Winnipeg Free Press*, December 7, 1977**

OTTAWA (CP) — Jack Stabback, 56-year-old vice-chairman of the National Energy Board, is the only contender so far to take over the board's top job which becomes vacant at the end of the month.

Government sources say Stabback, a veteran civil servant and a member of the board for nine years, is the sole name being bandied in energy circles to become head of the federal regulatory agency.

Marshall Crowe, chairman of the board since 1973, announced last month he has retired effective December 31 for personal reasons. He is headed for the private sector, possibly as a financial consultant.

A year ago, government sources said Prime Minister Trudeau was interested in bringing the then Manitoba premier Ed Schreyer to Ottawa, either in the cabinet or a senior civil service post. One such job considered was as board chairman.

But now the sources say Schreyer, who lost in a bid for re-election of his New Democratic Party government this fall, "has lost much of his lustre."

Attracting a successful, New Democratic premier to his administration would have been politically beneficial for the prime minister, they said.

But no such benefits would accrue by bringing in a defeated premier who already has said he is not sure he will like the job of opposition leader.

Stabback is widely seen as one of the most knowledgable board members on technical aspects of the oil and natural gas industry, but the sources say one concern already voiced is that he may be weak on political expertise.

But the sources add that by no means would rule him out as chairman. It may, however, force the government to try to boost the political awareness of the board through other appointments.

Stabback, a native of Alberta and a chemical engineer, joined the board in 1964 after working with the Alberta oil and gas conservation board.

He served as a member of the staff and was chief engineer before being appointed a board member in 1968. He was named associate vice-chairman in 1974 and vice-chairman a year ago.

It was Stabback who took over as head of a board panel hearing the northern pipeline case when the Supreme Court ruled in the winter of 1976 there was a danger Crowe might have a bias and could not take part in the proceedings.

Crowe had served on the board of directors of one of the pipeline applicants in the early 1970s. At the time he was representing the Canada Development Corp., a government-owned company.

ENERGY BOARD POST
SCHREYER RULED OUT? *Winnipeg Tribune*, December 7, 1977
Tribune News Roundup

OTTAWA — Defeat of his New Democratic Party government at the polls this fall may have cost former Manitoba premier Ed Schreyer a chance at heading the National Energy Board.

A year ago, government sources said Prime Minister Trudeau was interested in bringing the then premier to Ottawa, either in the cabinet or a senior civil service post. One such job considered was chairman of the federal regulatory agency.

But now sources say Schreyer, whose government lost a bid for re-election, "has lost much of his lustre."

Attracting a successful, New Democratic premier to his administration would have been politically beneficial for the prime minister, they said. But no such benefits would accrue by bringing in a defeated premier who already has said he is not sure he will like the job of opposition leader.

The only contender for the energy job now being bandied in government circles is Jack Stabback, 56-year-old vice-chairman and a member of the board for nine years.

* * * * * *

A number of points can be made. First, it seems clear that both stories come from the same source, since some paragraphs are the same in both. The *Free Press* article suggests that both began, in fact, as a Canadian Press wire-service item. One suspects that the *Free Press* printed the wire-service story *verbatim*, while the *Tribune* edited it to make it shorter and to give it more local appeal, thus making it at the same time more readable. Second, the headlines are distinctly different. The *Free Press* headline is accurate and complete, but, it must be said, boring. One can easily imagine a reader skimming over it and choosing to ignore it completely. Who, after all, is Stabback? And who or what is NEB? There is nothing here to make one's ears prick. By contrast, the *Tribune* headline is a little masterpiece. It ignores Stabback but features Schreyer's name, a very prominent local name and very much in the news at that time. Further, it does not make a statement, but rather asks a question: "Schreyer ruled out?" Ruled out of what, one wonders? The *Tribune* headline carries with it a very real hook to catch the reader's attention. So, while the *Free Press* provides maximum information — certainly far more than does its rival — the *Tribune* wins on straight journalistic criteria of interest and readability.

Here is another example, using the three Toronto dailies' treatment of one story. It graphically illustrates the approaches of the newspapers involved: the seriousness of the *Globe and Mail*, the razzle-dazzle of the *Sun*, with the *Star* occupying the middle ground.

ONTARIO WANTS PRISONERS TO BE GARDENERS
***Toronto Star*, March 26, 1980**
By Joe O'Donnell *Toronto Star*

Ontario's 5,000 inmates will soon be responsible for bringing in some of the bacon they eat under a new provincial government scheme.

Correctional Services Minister Gordon Walker said yesterday that starting this summer, inmates will be plowing land, harvesting crops and canning fresh produce — and in some cases, raising livestock — at the province's detention and correction centres.

"It's about time prisoners started earning more of their own keep, instead of the burden being all on the taxpayers," Walker said.

It now costs $131 million a year to feed, clothe and shelter the province's prisoners and the food tab alone is $4 million.

Walker estimates his program can reduce the food bill by up to 20 per cent.

"Starting this year, we will be converting as much land as possible at our institutions to the cultivation of root crops and vegetables," Walker said.

"Every institution will participate, including the smaller jails where vegetable gardens will be created and/or expanded. Many of our larger institutions will also be raising chickens and pigs."

Walker said the government's goal is to have inmates farming more than 2,000 acres by 1985. "I am confident we will become totally self-sufficient in the production of essential root crops and vegetables."

He said the existing cannery at Burtch Correctional Centre in Brantford, where tomatoes and apple juice are canned, will be expanded to include other vegetables. Surplus productions will be sold to other institutions operated by the government.

Also a new plant to manufacture farm equipment for the program will be established at Guelph Correctional Centre. Walker said prisoners won't be forced to participate in the new program but there are incentives for them to pitch in.

For starters, prisoners can reduce their sentences by up to one-third through work, or skills training programs under a scheme introduced two years ago by former minister Frank Drea.

Walker said most prisoners "would rather work than lie around reading comic books."

Ed Ziemba, corrections critic for the New Democratic Party, agreed in principle with the program but said he doubts if the province has the staff to implement it fully.

Other steps announced by Walker to cut prison budget include:

- In-house manufacture of inmate clothing.
- Wood-cutting products.
- Expansion of industrial programs to include products such as mattresses, barbecue grills, picnic benches and auto parts.
- More energy-saving by conversions to alternatives such as solar-heating water.

HIGH COST OF SLAMMER
CONS TO WORK OFF TAB
***Toronto Sun*, March 26, 1980**

In a bid to bring the provincial penal system closer to self-sufficiency, more Ontario convicts will be put to work producing their own food and clothing, Correctional Services Minister Gordon Walker said yesterday.

Walker said making cons put in an honest day's work is preferable to having them sitting in their cells day after day, "reading comic books".

Walker said prisoners must start assuming a larger share of the tab they run up while in prison.

At present, provincial taxpayers shell out $131 million annually to keep 5,000 inmates in 52 short-term and long-term correctional centres.

Walker promised to get prisoners tilling vegetable gardens, tending chickens and pigs and canning some of the produce.

Every prison in Ontario's system will participate, Walker said, and even farm implements will be manufactured internally — at the Guelph Correctional Centre.

Food surpluses will be sold to other government agencies.

Inmate clothing will also be produced, and other convicts will be put to work cutting wood for use in public parks, Walker said.

PRISONERS MUST START WORKING TO EARN THEIR KEEP, MINISTER SAYS
***Toronto Globe and Mail*, March 26, 1980**

By Rosemary Speirs

Inmates of Ontario jails and correctional centres will have to start working eight hours a day to produce their own food and clothing, Corrections Minister Gordon Walker announced yesterday.

"It is better than having them sitting in their cells reading comic books," he said.

Mr. Walker told the Legislature that over the next five years he plans to make the institutions as self-sufficient as possible in providing for inmates' needs.

"The time has come to place more of the correctional cost burden on the inmates and less on the taxpayers of Ontario," he said.

It now costs the provincial government $131-million a year to keep 5,000 inmates in 42 short-stay jails and detention centres and in the 10 longer-term correctional centres.

About 2,000 of the inmates, most of them in the correctional centres where sentences go up to two years, now do some form of part-time work or take educational courses. The jobs include maintaining their own buildings by cleaning floors or helping in the kitchens, making clothing or mattresses, or manufacturing products for use by the public such as licence plates or muffler parts. One group is paid to slaughter cattle at the Guelph Abattoir.

But Mr. Walker said he wants to expand this sort of program to get all inmates working productively eight hours a day.

All institutions, including smaller jails, will convert land for growing vegetables. Inmates will also raise chickens and pigs, can vegetables and juices, make farm implements such as forks and shovels, manufacture all their own clothing, cut wood or work in small cottage industries producing finished products.

If inmates decline the new jobs, Mr. Walker told reporters, "we have a way of dealing with inmates that seems to encourage them to participate in our programs."

He said that while inmates used to be able to "earn remissions" (shorten their sentences) by good behavior, now they will have to work to qualify for shorter terms.

"They must earn their way out. If they refuse, we would take that into account in terms of when they are released."

Although earning remissions will be the main incentive, Mr. Walker also said inmates might be allowed to earn more than the $5.43 a week which is the maximum they can get now for good behavior. Out of this money, the inmates must purchase all soap, personal hygiene products and tobacco they use.

Both Mr. Walker and Ed Ziemba, corrections critic for the New Democratic Party, said they believe most inmates will prefer keeping busy at productive jobs to just sitting in their cells.

"Mr. Walker is introducing progressive ideas for red-necked reasons. When he beats his chest like he was doing today in the Legislature he is trying to get the message out to the folks he is tough with offenders," Mr. Ziemba said.

"However, the idea is one no inmate will disagree with. They would prefer being busy."

Asked whether he has concerns about forcing people to work, Mr. Walker said: "The hardest labor or all is idleness. Nothing destroys our human resources more."

He said inmates from Mimico who have been shovelling snow for 250 handicapped or elderly North York residents have found the experience "extremely meaningful.

"They get to realize some people are worse off than they are."

Mr. Walker said inmates' work will never be enough to make the institutions completely self-supporting, but he hopes to reduce present costs by at least $5 million a year.

"At a cost of $50 per day per inmate, our institutional operating costs are higher than many leading hotel rates," he said. Producing all their own meat, vegetables and clothes would reduce costs, but so would the reduced need for recreational and exercise programs.

Mr. Walker said that by the end of this summer he hopes to have 400 acres of institutional land in farm production, and by the end of five years about 2,000 acres.

The Corrections Minister said food for the institutions now is purchased in bulk from large wholesalers. As the institutions convert to producing more of their own food, he said, local farmers will benefit because they'll probably be hired to help with such tasks as combining wheat.

He said he is negotiating with the federal Government for an exchange of inmate produce. The jails might trade fireproof mattresses made by inmates for the leather shoes produced in federal prisons, for example.

At present inmates at Millbrook produce car licence plates, at Maplehurst they make chiropractic tables, and at the Guelph Abbatoir they slaughter 750 cattle a week.

"We plan to put more and more inmates into productive work to teach them trade skills and to generate new revenues," Mr. Walker said.

One reent project, he said, had inmates building a new 20-foot-high wall at the Barrie jail. "It is ironic and fitting as well that they were building their own enclosure."

However, Mr. Ziemba said he has his doubts about whether Mr. Walker can save a great deal of money through work programs, because they will require increased supervisory and other staff.

"Organizing work on that scale would be an extraordinary feat for the present staff to handle," Mr. Ziemba said.

* * * * * *

There is nothing insidious in any of this. It is not that newspapers are somehow conspiratorially involved in a plot to hoodwink the public. Rather, the point is that the way news is presented can influence the way that people perceive it, and hence its impact. There is an old journalistic maxim to the effect that truth is sacred while comment is free, but in practice it is not always easy to decide where the line between them lies. Here, for example, are two headlines, both correct and both based upon the same news release, and yet conveying very different impressions: "Manitoba gets net gain of 22 MD's in the past year" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, 3 Nov. 1977); "Smallest increase in 11 years: Doctor drain gets worse" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, 4 Nov. 1977). The problem is probably worse, because less obvious, on television. As many observers have pointed out, at least newspapers try to make a clear distinction between reporting and editorializing, to the point of putting editorial comment in a separate part of the newspaper. On television, by contrast, news and comment are combined into one. This problem is, in turn, exacerbated by television's need to dramatize and to personalize and by the necessity to cover a story in a very short space of time.

All this takes us into the world of the media proper and there is not space here to pursue such questions as the role of the 'gatekeeper' in editing the flow of news, or the influence of advertisers and publishers over the presentation of news. They are, however, important questions and students need to examine them. The most important can be quickly listed:

1. What are the sources of news information and does this affect the selection and presentation of the news?
2. Who establishes editorial policies and by what criteria?
3. Who owns the media and how does their socioeconomic position affect their policies?
4. Does the media's dependence on advertising revenue affect their policies?

5. Is the increasing concentration of media ownership a cause for concern?
6. What balance should be struck between comprehensive news coverage and readable news coverage?
7. To what extent do the media simplify and sensationalize the news?
8. Do the media present a fair selection of viewpoints on all issues?
9. What is an acceptable balance between factual and interpretative comment?
10. Should the media be seen as a public service or as a means of making money?

Such questions can be discussed only if students know something. They cannot be taken up in a vacuum, so that discussion becomes little more than an exchange of mutual ignorance. There is a case, therefore, for including some coverage of the media in the Canadian history or Canadian studies syllabus. Appropriate material is increasingly available, as indicated in the bibliography. Classroom teaching should also be supplemented by visits to newspapers and to radio and television stations, and by visits to the classroom by media people. In both cases, however, such visits are of most use when students have been properly taught, so that they know enough to ask good questions.

The two examples of how Winnipeg and Toronto treated news-stories differently indicate the possibilities of a wider comparison of different newspapers. If it can be instructive to compare newspapers from the same city, it can be even more so to compare them from different parts of the country. A comparison of front pages, for example, provides an especially graphic example of Canadian regionalism. In a country the size of Canada different regions have different priorities and see the same issue from different perspectives. One of the most concrete ways to make this point with students is through an examination of different newspapers, possibly using an outline such as the one contained on page 63.

Even a simple wall display can be effective. Students are usually surprised, and sometimes even intrigued, at the number of daily newspapers in Canada, even though it is much smaller than it used to be. They too easily assume that other newspapers are like their own and while it is true that there are more similarities than differences among newspapers so far as format and appearance are concerned, students are taken with the differences between the appearance of, say, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Sun*. In fact, newspaper names can have an appeal of their own: *Record, Spectator, Star* and the rest are fairly standard, but there are also such names as *Le Droit*, the *Reminder*, the *Nugget, Le Devoir*, the *Whig-Standard, l'Evangeline*, the *Packet and Times*, the *Intelligencer*. All this can be effectively presented by mounting a large map of Canada on a wall and surrounding it with front pages of newspapers from across the country, with coloured tape connecting the pages to their places of publication on the map. It is not a particularly profound learning experience, but it does serve to illustrate one aspect of Canadian life.

Beyond all this, it is also important to teach students, by whatever method, about the political role and influence of the media. This must include at least three components. The first might be described as indirect influence, that is to say the effect of the media on people's attitudes, perceptions or behaviour which, though not directly political, may spill over into the political arena. The second is the direct influence of the media on people's political knowledge, attitudes or behaviour. The third describes the role of the media in the political process and the ways in which they have affected the working of political institutions and practices. In this essay, none of these topics can be fully elaborated, so that what follows must inevitably be very cursory.

	Newspaper A	Newspaper B	Newspaper C	Etc.
1. Name of paper				
2. Place of publication				
3. How many stories are on the front page?				
4. What is the major story (topic and column inches)?				
5. Other stories (topics and column inches): i) ii) iii) iv) etc.)				
6. List the headlines in order of importance: i) ii) iii) iv) etc.)				
7. How many stories are from wire-services?				
8. How many from the paper's own staff?				
9. How many stories are of international importance (number of stories and total column inches)?				
10. How many national?				
11. How many local?				
12. Briefly describe any pictures (size/position on page/subject).				
13. What is there of "human interest (topics, column inches, position on page)?				
14. Now that you have completed the survey, what conclusions can you draw?				

Perhaps the most obvious indirect effect of the media is their promotion of values which have a potentially political impact. In the last ten or fifteen years, for example, various topics have become the subject of public debate which, earlier, were considered to be either non-issues, or too delicate for mention, or too controversial, or simply not suitable for polite conversation. The most obvious example is that of sexuality in all its forms, and such issues as homosexual rights, pornography, censorship, abortion, the birth-control pill have become political problems. It is difficult to know just how the media have influenced both the debate and behaviour, but it is difficult to believe that they have had no influence. To what extent they have provoked or catered to it is a matter for argument, but that they have played an important part seems beyond dispute.

All of which is to say that, when considering the political role of the media, one has to consider far more than only those programmes which have overt political content. Even the frothiest entertainment item may have political ramifications. What, for example, are the political implications of using pretty women to present the weather news? What are the political implications of women reporters breaking into the male preserve of sportscasting (not to mention their breaking into the locker-rooms of the athletes)? What does it mean politically that so few native people appear on Canadian television as announcers, news-readers and so on? Indeed, what does it say about Canadian politics that, although Canadian advertisements now feature blacks, they rarely feature native people? Is there any merit in the theory that the media serve as an anodyne, taking people's minds off the real problems, that they have become the new opium of the people? And so on and so on. We will have made progress if we get students to examine such questions and to realize that, one way or another, the media can affect the conduct of political life.

There is also the notion that the media help to make people passive. They treat people not as producers, or even analysts of information, but as consumers of it, pure and simple. The British Broadcasting Corporation, for example, rejected *Sesame Street*, in large part, for this very reason, arguing that it did not allow for any personal, active involvement on the part of the children who watched it. One analyst has suggested that television, in particular, may promote a sense of vicarious involvement rather than a capacity for real action.

In addition, the media inevitably simplify reality and turn it into entertainment. Anyone who has read of the war-time intelligence work of Sir William Stevenson, for example, would think that it contains more than enough excitement, mystery, adventure and intrigue. However, when it was turned into a television series, it was made even more "entertaining", with a handsome male lead who possessed a superhuman repertoire of talents and who appeared in almost every incident, and with a suitably poignant romantic entanglement. At the time of writing, the best example is provided by the film *Norma Rae*, which has been praised for its success in bringing the problems of industrial workers to the screen. Certainly, the film has it share of gripping moments, of good guys and bad guys, of excitement and suspense. But, as a cynic might comment, so does a professional wrestling match. Not so often noted is that the young male organizer in the film was in real life a middle-aged union veteran, that there was no romantic involvement between him and the heroine, and, above all, that, unlike the film, the real-life heroine was fired and the union is still battling for survival. This glossing over of reality is general throughout the media. Archie Bunker may be a bigot, but he is lovable. The doctors in M.A.S.H. may hate war, but they have a good time and send soldiers back to the front without too much compunction.

For obvious reasons the media do not show us much of the seamier side of society. The odd documentary or news item apart, and except for a handful of

muck-raking magazines, they present a panglossian view of the world. Their solution to the racial problems in the U.S.A., for example, is to put more black faces on television and to run a few programmes featuring black actors and actresses. One wonders, however, if this approach will lead viewers to believe that the problems, be they race or any other, are more or less solved. In this sense, the media both define the political agenda and influence people's perceptions of it.

Linked with this is the media's determination to treat everything as entertainment. Television news, for example, has been described as "action-packed drama narrated by superstar journalists . . . a drama, sitcom and talk show all rolled into one."[32] As historians have long lamented, even history is distorted and falsified to make it more dramatic. Real-life will never be as exciting as it appears in the media. An experiment in the U.S.A. involved showing university students two videotapes of a political demonstration. One consisted of the full two-hours of the demonstration from beginning to end; the other of the short television-news coverage of the same event, edited as all news items are. The students preferred the television version, saying that it was more exciting. Indeed, one reads that nature has begun to copy art, that in some places policemen are beginning to dress and behave like their television counterparts. One of Britain's leading television journalists, Robin Day, recently commented that television is "a medium of shock rather than explanation, a cruel medium which strikes at the emotions rather than the intellect. Because of its insatiable appetite for visual action and violence, it has tended to distort and trivialise the news and, in my opinion, has contributed to the spread of violence and unreason." (*The Guardian*, 16 May 1980). The danger is that people may turn their backs on real life and its problems, or come to have unreal expectations of what is possible, only to be disillusioned when they find out that it does not work as it does in the media. The implications of this for people's political behaviour need no elaboration.

Besides entertaining, the media inevitably simplify. Issues are personalized, good guys and bad guys are identified, winners and losers are established. To take one example, current at the time of writing, the whole complex issue of Iran and its relations with the West, is characterized for the media by one man, the Ayatollah Khomeini. This media habit has been best described by an American television producer:

> Look, during the President's (i.e. Nixon's) trip (to China) we had a panel of six academic experts on China sitting around a table and discussing China and the implications of the trip for an hour on the air. They couldn't agree on anything. By the end of the hour you forgot what the issues were. Now, our correspondent over there can spend a day or two talking to people and asking questions and so on and get at the truth of what's happening.[33]

Since politics is usually far from simple, one can only speculate as to the long-term impact of the media's concern to simplify everything in the interests of entertainment, ratings, and profit.

The media also, of course, have more immediate political consequences. Above all, perhaps, they establish or reinforce people's sense of identity, hence the recurrent concern for U.S. domination of the electronic media in Canada. In newly independent states, the media are assigned an overt nation-building role. In revolutionary societies they are expected to play their part in shaping consciousness and mobilizing the population. In more conservative societies they may work in more subtle ways (though one hardly dare describe the Americanizing function of the U.S. media as subtle), but the end result is the same: the media work to establish a sense of identity, usually though not always at the level of the nation-state. As the

example of Quebec suggests, this is not necessarily a straightforward process. In establishing one identity, the media may dissolve or weaken or another, so that the identifying unit becomes Quebec as well as or instead of Canada.

At the same time as establishing a sense of political community (to use Easton's phrase), the media usually legitimize the political system. At the very least, they increase or reinforce people's knowledge of the system. The frequent references to or reports from Ottawa, to Parliament and to important political positions such as Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Governor-General — all serve to give people at least the terminology of the system in which they live. Less directly, the media also work to strengthen people's belief in their political institutions. There have been very few instances where the media have either chosen or been allowed to attack the institutions of which they are a part. In this regard, the media are potentially an important agent of political socialization.

This does not mean that the media will uphold the authorities on any particular issue, for such is obviously not the case. In publicizing the political system and institutions, they do not necessarily support the particular politicians who are in power. Thus the constant worry for the media of balancing the viewpoints of government and opposition and, at times, of having to take on the task of deciding when something is or is not in the national interest. In 1970, for example, when Parliament adopted the War Measures Act, Prime Minister Trudeau made effective use of television. The question, then as now, however, was whether his broadcasts were in the national interest and thus could stand alone, or whether they were partisan and thus would need balancing with others. Certainly, at least since the days of Aberhart and Roosevelt, politicians have seen the potential of the broadcast media. Indeed, today, movements attempting to get their viewpoint heard and seen in the face of media indifference resort to increasingly spectacular efforts to attract media attention, hence the hi-jackings, the kidnappings, the bombings and the rest. Clearly, the media are seen as an important political asset. As one commentator has noted of the crisis of October 1970: "From one point of view, the October crisis can be seen as a battle for the temporary control of the communication system in Quebec".[54]

Within certain limits, however, the media do present a variety of viewpoints. They have generally solved the problem of whom to allow on the airwaves (and for how long) by allocating time according to electoral support, which is reasonably straightforward but does create problems of its own. Above all, it reflects a nothing succeeds like success approach, so that Liberals and Conservatives get most of the time with the N.D.P. coming hot on their heels, but with Social Crediters, Creditistes, Communists, Marxist-Leninists and others barely appearing. This may reflect the will of the people at any particular time, but it does mean that the people get to hear only a certain range of views, usually those which accept the political system more or less as it is.

In this sense, the media are a conservative force politically. At the same time, however, they obviously do not automatically support those in power. Newspapers long ago saw themselves as the fourth estate and from time to time the media become a more powerful opposition than the official opposition itself. As was suggested earlier, there are those who blame the media for the defeat of the Clark government in 1980, just as there are those who hold the media responsible for the growth of Trudeaumania in 1968. In the U.S.A., the media played an important part in the opposition to Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam policies and uncovered Watergate. As these examples suggest, the media do not simply stand back and report politics. They also make politics and are themselves part of the political

process. In one way or another, they contribute to the shaping of people's political knowledge, attitudes and even behaviour.

This is equally true in the international sphere. Although McLuhan argued that the media had helped to make the world a "global village", they have done just as much to strengthen nationalism and ethnocentrism. For most people, whatever they see of other nations and cultures is seen through the media and the media reflect national perceptions. Thus, the French see the world through French eyes (and media), the American through American, and so on. This means, however, that large parts of the world may not be seen at all. Third world countries complain, with considerable justice, that the flow of news works against them. International news services all originate in the northern hemisphere; what they tell us about the southern is shaped by their concern with the unusual, the dramatic, the exotic (the entertainment function, again). Ironically, the countries of the southern hemisphere themselves have to rely on the northern news agencies for news. And so the world never sees itself whole. How many Canadians' views of Africa, for example, are an amalgam of images of Tarzan, Idi Amin and exotic wild-life, thanks to the media?

As this example suggests, the media can be influential in establishing what has been called a "political climate." They can certainly help establish the political agenda. Obviously, politicians are sensitive to the media. They need publicity for their ideas and for themselves. A good media image is increasingly necessary for political success. At the same time, the media play a part in deciding to which issues politicians will respond. It would be a rash politician, indeed, who ignored what the media agreed was important. It was this media power that led Stanley Baldwin in the early 1930's to accuse England's press magnates of seeking power without responsibility, "the privilege of the harlot through the ages".

This raises the third aspect of any examination of the political role of the media: their impact upon and role within the political system itself. Various elements have already been mentioned, for example, the media's part in political socialization; their influence in setting the agenda of political discussion; their publicizing of certain issues; their mobilizing of opinion; their creation of image and publicity as important elements of political success; their sponsoring of political debates between leaders.

Perhaps the biggest question is whether the media will, deliberately or otherwise, bring about changes in politicial institutions in the same way that they have brought about changes in professional sport, for example. Increasingly, professional sport becomes a media event: rules and schedules are changed to accommodate media needs; styles of play change to make the games more entertaining (that word, again); all sorts of visual frills are added by way of colourful uniforms, personal interviews, cheerleaders. In short, professional sport has been drastically changed by the demands of the media. The question that arises is whether the same will happen to politics. To some extent, it already has, as has been suggested in these pages. The media have created a leadership-style of politics with political leaders becoming increasingly presidential. Public relations and image have sometimes become more important than substance. Campaigning has changed markedly. A new style of politics has emerged. John Diefenbaker never really "came across" on television, for example. His style of politics belonged and was suited to the old days of speaking tours and public meetings. Everything about him was larger than life and on television he became almost a caricature of himself. Pierre Trudeau, on the other hand, is pre-eminently a television politician.

Given the revolutionary and close at hand changes that are promised in communications technology thanks to developments in electronics, one may be reasonably

certain that in the near future changes will be even more far-reaching. The age of push-button media, when we can speak back to our sets, when we can record a vote in an instant, is almost here. Already, through ombudsman and open-line programmes, the media are giving the ordinary citizen some leverage against government and bureaucracy. It may be that the coming technological changes will increase this power. On the other hand, it may be that they will enhance the power of whoever can control the media to persuade and manipulate. If the teaching of politics is seriously intended to contribute to people's autonomy and freedom, one can hardly teach a version of politics in which the media do not appear.

CHAPTER 8

ACTION PROJECTS

Previous sections of this essay have attempted to describe ways of making the teaching of politics more interesting and more vital than it sometimes is. They are based on two principles: one, that to teach politics is different from and more worthwhile than to teach civics, and, two, that the ways in which politics is taught are as important as what is taught. It is also true, however, that they all describe more or less conventional ways of teaching, which is seen as best occurring in classrooms. There is, it must be admitted, always the risk that their intent will be counteracted by the organizational imperatives of the school. The Ten-Nation Survey of Civic Education sounded a sombre note in this regard: "Perhaps a hierarchical organizational such as the school is not the best setting for inculcating democratic values."[55]

There are at least four ways to tackle this, however. One is to develop and apply systematically the types of teaching strategies already described. A second is to use the school itself as an object of political analysis. A third is to reform the governance of the school so as to allow for more student participation. A fourth is to engage students in politically relevant activity outside the school.

The only systematic attempt to use the school itself as an object of political analysis is the *Comparing Political Experiences* project. The general thrust of CPE has already been described, but it is worth looking in more detail as its notion of the school as a "political laboratory":

> The school is viewed as a microcosm of political life and everyday experiences in leadership and decision-making are utilized both for study and for participation by students. In this way the students' everyday life experiences in the school in peer groups, clubs and school governance activities are tapped for multiple instructional purposes.[56]

Thus, in the first instance, the school is seen as a case-study in politics, embodying as it does such politically related concepts as power, authority, socialization, decision-making and so on. Accordingly, the first unit of CPE examines the school as a political institution, that is to say as a setting in which occur decision-making, leadership, communication and participation.

Beyond this, however, the school also serves as an arena for the participation experiences which are so much a part of CPE. For example, "students can act as participant-observers in decision-making situations, interview relevant leaders, or make changes in student organizations in order to determine how alternative forms

of political organization work."[57] They are also taught to conceptualize, rehearse and put into practice different styles of behaviour and participation in student clubs and other school organizations and then to reflect upon their experiences.

The directors of CPE acknowledge that this is likely to change what happens in schools: "The introduction of a program which promotes student social self-fulfilment, participant roles, and political competencies will have demonstrable effects on the social organization of a school."[58] Teachers, for example, will have to acquire the skills necessary to organize and implement participation activities; students will move from passive to active roles. Despite this, CPE argues that schools can accommodate the programme without undue fear of the consequences: "the pulse of political life in the school will change dramatically though not necessarily negatively as a result of this program." This is not the place to discuss how realistic this expectation is, or how receptive schools will be. For our purposes, the interest of CPE lies in its rigorous approach to using the school as a vehicle of political education.

There are those who argue that simply to use the school in this way does not go far enough, since, for the most part, schools are run (some would say they have to be run) on authoritarian and hierarchical lines and thus can never promote students' feelings of efficacy until they change fundamentally. This argument has benefitted in recent years from the work of Lawrence Kohlberg and his associates in connection with the concept of the 'just community'. As Kohlberg puts it:

> . . . if you want to develop morality or a sense of justice in kids, you have to create a just school, a just classroom environment. For the fact is that much of what kids learn comes not from books and materials, but from the moral environment and atmosphere that you establish in your classroom . . .[59]

The corollary of this argument, of course, is that there is little or no justice in schools as presently constituted so that it is impossible for students to get the experience which is so vital if worthwhile political education is to occur.

From these considerations emerges a case for some form of student self-government, or at least for student participation in school governance in a different form from what we now know. Entwistle has argued that this need not be an all-or-nothing affair. He points out that there are various levels and loci of decision-making in schools. The levels include decisions about curriculum, teaching-strategies, student evaluation, rules and regulations, school meals and so on. The loci include the school board, the superintendent, the principal, the department-heads and so forth. Entwistle argues that students could have a real voice in at least some of these things: student participation need not mean student control, although he ignores the objection that participation on limited terms is often as bad as no participation at all.

Student participation in its most advanced form is perhaps best represented by A. S. Neill's Summerhill and similar schools. It is possible, however, to achieve the same result within the public school system as shown by various U.S. experiments deriving from Kohlberg's work in moral education, all of which take a far more structured approach to the question than would be accepted at Summerhill.

In one version, a mini-school was established within a larger institution. The school developed its own curriculum, based upon English and Social Studies and giving heavy emphasis to moral discussion, role-taking and the relationship between school affairs and wider social issues. For other subjects, students registered with regular school classes.

The emphasis in all these experiments is upon the establishment of a 'just community'. Participatory democracy is the central aim. Wasserman argues that

many alternative schools of the 1960's retreated to traditional forms of governance because for them student participation was only one among a number of priorities and, when these conflicted with each other, it was sacrificed. In the just community, however, it is paramount. Everything else is secondary. For this reason, the community meeting is fundamental: "its function is to promote the controlled conflict and open exchange of opinions about fairness that are essential to the moral development of the individuals in the community."[60]

Such a meeting can easily dissolve into chaos or factionalism, like a Polish Diet of the eighteenth century, in the absence of proper supports. For this reason, it is combined with preparatory small-group meetings to give everyone a chance to look at the issues; with student-teacher advisory groups; with committees; and with training in the running of discussion. All these are combined to provide students with the necessary experiences of moral development and the growth of efficacy. Although the concern of the just community projects is for moral education, their relevance for political education is obvious.

Efficacy is, of course, also very much the goal of those who see political education as best done, at least in part, *via* planned, out-of-school experiences. There is a small but growing trend, especially in parts of the U.S.A., to see political education in terms of getting students involved in some sort of political action outside the school. The word 'political' here should be interpreted generously; the point is to get youngsters to take part in community and public issues.

> Cyclists may wish to establish and assist in the regulation of bike trails. Volunteer workers may wish to change some regulations in a mental hospital. Housing organizers may seek more frequent trash collection or more frequent inspection for code violations. Students may advocate an increased budget for women's athletics at the high school. A centre for runaways may attempt to influence politics in a police department or juvenile court. A black student union may have to work for official recognition by the school. According to our definition, these are all attempts to exert influence in public affairs.[61]

In short, student action outside school can occur in at least five forms: (1) voluntary service with social agencies; (2) community projects; (3) political action with political parties or interest groups; (4) community study and surveys; and (5) internship in a community organization. In all cases, advocates of action programmes insist that such activities are not extracurricular but rather are part of the curriculum, integrated with more conventional courses and offered for credit.

All such programmes, of course, are forms of political education in that they are all founded upon a particular concept of citizenship. They lament the inactivity and lack of participation in public affairs displayed by the public at large and amply documented by political scientists. Instead, they offer a picture of the informed, active citizen. Newmann has offered, for example, the idea of 'environmental competence' and especially "the ability to exert influence in public affairs."

Action programmes blame schools, at least in part, for the large degree of apathy that now exists. Newmann argues that schools have never seriously tried to teach the skills, knowledge and attitudes that would produce environmental competence. Their "underlying orientation tends to emphasize the importance of students learning to understand, describe or explain reality, rather than exerting an impact upon it." Even worse, the dominant modes of teaching assume student passivity. Livelier teaching methods and better materials will never solve the problem, which is inherent in the institutional structure of the school and curriculum: "The problem is not so much that the teaching is uninspired . . . or that the materials are

dull . . . but rather that young people are offered a steady diet of classroom lectures and discussions on topics which seldom really touch their lives."[62]

Some supporters of action programmes also draw upon psychological evidence and base their arguments upon the needs of adolescents. They argue that "young people are citizens *now*, not merely preparing for citizenship" and go on to point out that youth are to all intents and purposes denied any chances for meaningful involvement in the community:

> There is something wrong with our socialization process when adolescence, the stage of life during which energy and sometimes even idealization are highest, has become a time when waiting is the central task . . . Youthful apathy, cynicism, hostility, and even delinquency, are some of the consequences of treating youth as incompetent and childish.[63]

Action programmes, of course, consist of more than just going into the community and doing something. They involve choices and priorities as to what should be done; they involve considerable research into issues and problems; they involve confronting and dealing with political realities; they involve learning the arts of negotiation, persuasion and influence. They are 'small-p' political in that they aim to develop a particular kind of citizenship; they are 'large-p' political in that they immerse students in the political realities of everyday life.

There are also action projects which need not involve taking students out of school and which, therefore, may be simpler to implement. In particular, the use of children to teach other children has attractive possibilities. There is some evidence that, when children do teach children, both those doing the learning and those doing the teaching benefit.[64] But, apart from the academic gains, the attractions of this approach for anyone interested in political education is its potential for giving children real responsibilities in a worthwhile task and hence increasing their sense of competence.

Conrad and Hedin suggest five criteria for assessing the value of action programmes, arguing that they must give students the chance to perform tasks that both students and community see as worthwhile. The criteria are that students should

1. have some responsibility for making their own decisions;
2. have other people depend on their actions;
3. work on tasks that strengthen their thinking both cognitively and ethically;
4. work with other age groups;
5. reflect systematically on their experience.[65]

Points #3 and #5 are especially important in that they indicate that action programmes are not intended to promote action for action's sake, but rather as carefully organized attempts to develop students' political skills, sense of responsibility and general feelings of competence.

This can also be accomplished, in a more narrowly political sense, by involving students directly in the political process itself. It is now common, for example, especially since the voting age was lowered to eighteen years of age, for politicians and candidates for election to visit schools to speak to student groups and to submit themselves to questioning. Teachers also have more latitude than was once the case to bring appropriate speakers to their classes when dealing with political topics. Some teachers involve their students either as participants or eye-witnesses in the political process. Such activities have included observing the progress of a strike or lockout, including trips to the picket-lines and interviews with those involved; participating in a campaign on such community issues as the provision of recreation facilities, health care and so on. They have also included direct involvement by

students in election campaigns as part of their school programme. In this case, they work for a party of their own choice and take on duties as canvassers, office workers, committee members and so forth. Such activities can be fairly easily tied into such school requirements as essays and reports, while at the same time giving students valuable first-hand experience together with the chance, in class, to reflect systematically upon it. Other teachers have "interned" students with local politicians for, say, half a day a week in order that they might gather some direct experience of politics.

In short, there is an increasing awareness that it is not enough simply to teach students about politics. They must also experience it, become personally involved in it. Perhaps the safest way to do this is through such vicarious modes as role-playing and simulation. As valuable as these are, however, they lack the immediacy of contact with the real world. And this contact is crucial if we are to increase students' political skills and competence.

In any event, to return to the beginning of this discussion, contemporary approaches to the teaching of politics represent an attempt to deal with a number of considerations. First, they take account of the research into cognitive development and try to convert the often abstract subject-matter of politics into terms that students can understand through concrete, personal experience. Second, they take note of the findings of political socialization research that conventional approaches have not in fact proved very successful. Third, they recognize the findings of educational researchers as to the impact of the hidden curriculum. Fourth, they are grounded in a political theory which takes popular participation seriously and which sees politics as consisting primarily of issues and problems. The overriding purpose of education has been well described as the attainment of "personal autonomy based on reason."[66] It is especially applicable to political education, provided that it is combined with the achievement of a sense of community with others.

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27. Adapted from L. F. Anderson, R. C. Remy & R. C. Snyder, "Criteria for Improving Political Education in Elementary School", *International Journal of Political Education*, I (1977), pp. 61-72.
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APPENDIX I

A SUMMARY OF PROJECTS IN POLITICAL EDUCATION

POLITICAL EDUCATION PROJECTS

Project	Organizing Principles	Descriptive Materials	Student Materials
Harvard Social Studies Project	Persisting Issues	D. Oliver *et al. Teaching Public Issues in the High School,* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966). F. Newmann, *Clarifying Public Controversy,* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970). F. Newmann, "The Analysis of Public Controversy: New Focus for Social Studies", *School Review* 73, 1965. J. P. Shaver & D. Oliver, "Teaching Students to Analyze Public Controversy: A Curriculum Project Report", *Social Education* 28, 1964, 191-4, 248.	Public Issues Series, American Publications, Columbus, Ohio 43216
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